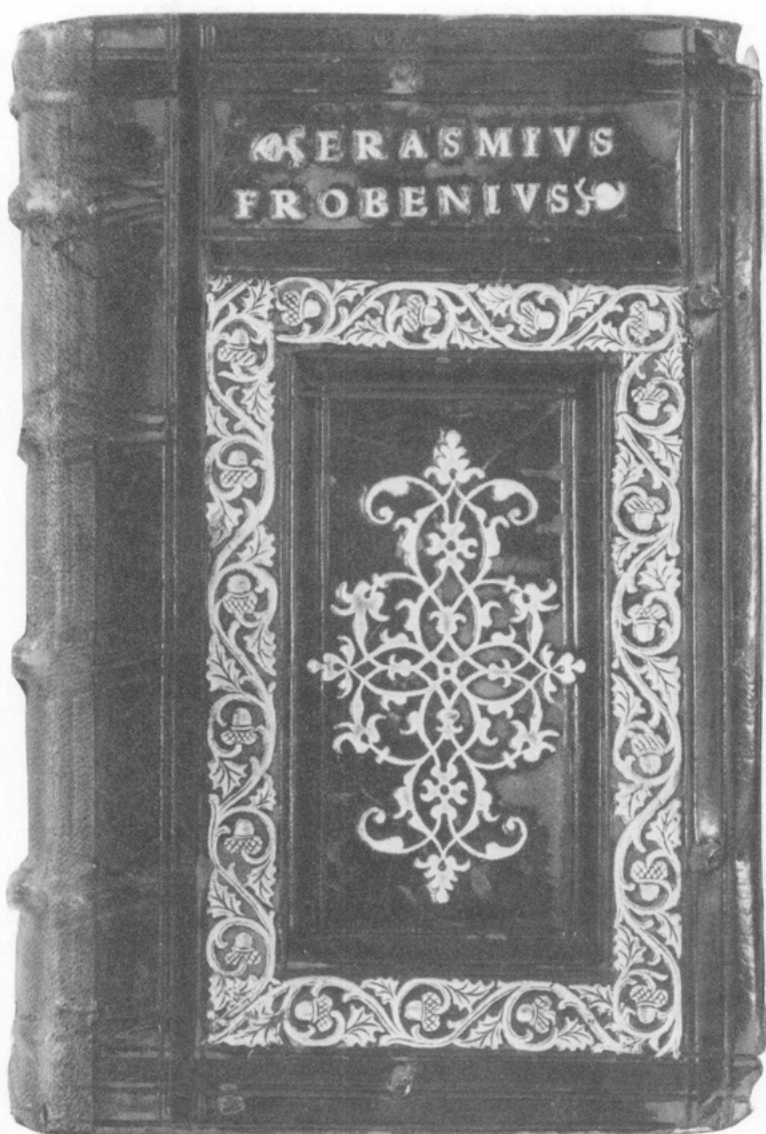


COLLECTED WORKS OF ERASMUS

VOLUME 39



Presentation copy of the enlarged edition of the *Colloquies*
issued in July–August 1522 (Basel: Johann Froben),
a gift to young Erasmus Froben, the printer's son and Erasmus' godson
Printed in vellum, this book has Erasmus' name
stamped in gold on the leather cover.
Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kupferstichkabinett

COLLECTED WORKS OF ERASMUS

COLLOQUIES

translated and annotated by

Craig R. Thompson

University of Toronto Press

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Collected Works of Erasmus

The aim of the Collected Works of Erasmus is to make available an accurate, readable English text of Erasmus' correspondence and his other principal writings. The edition is planned and directed by an Editorial Board, an Executive Committee, and an Advisory Committee.

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Foreword

The present volumes of the Collected Works of Erasmus, containing the annotated translation of Erasmus' *Familiar Colloquies*, are the fruit of singular dedication on the part of their translator and editor, Craig Thompson. As an early member of the Editorial Board (from 1974 on) he was one of those, with such as Wallace Ferguson and Sir Roger Mynors, whose initial support of the ambitious aims of the cwe brought with it the experience of a lifetime devoted to Erasmus scholarship, as well as the international reputation of his name. While his advice was invaluable to every aspect of the project as it was planned and developed, he tackled personally the initial volumes introducing the literary and educational writings (cwe 23–4), and was prominently involved in organizing the series on Erasmus' New Testament scholarship (cwe 41–60). However, it was always clear that the part of Erasmus' corpus most dear to him was the *Colloquies*, in no small part because of their close links with the history of English education and English literature.

His translation of the *Colloquies* first appeared in 1965 from University of Chicago Press, lacking a second volume of annotation which it was always his intention to add. It was agreed from the outset that cwe would republish it, after revision, with his full apparatus. In the event, ill health prevented his completing the final text as he would have wished, and it became the responsibility of the Editorial Board to see his manuscript through to publication. To this end many members of the Board have contributed according to their special interests, whether historical or philological. All of the translations have been freshly vetted by Charles Fantazzi and Alexander Dalzell, with the collaboration of Ann Dalzell. As this considerable undertaking was the common responsibility of the Board, its members are pleased now, as a body, to present this completed version as a testament of their admiration, gratitude, and affection for Craig Thompson.

The same sentiments are shared by four individuals, not members of the Editorial Board but associated with University of Toronto Press, whose

devotion to the exacting task of controlling a lengthy and complex text and transferring it to the medium of print was the one editorial contribution indispensable to all else. They are Mary Baldwin, Lynn Burdon, Penny Cole, and Philippa Matheson. For the final state of the text as published, the responsibility is that of the undersigned alone.

James K. McConica
Chairman, Editorial Board
Collected Works of Erasmus

Introduction

I

Towards the end of the colloquy 'Cyclops,' a gloomy, sceptical character tells an acquaintance that prophets are declaring the imminent end of the world. 'Where do they get the notion that the end of the world is near?' 'They say it's because men are behaving now just as they did before the Flood overwhelmed them. They feast, drink, stuff themselves, marry and are given in marriage, whore, buy, sell, pay and charge interest, build buildings. Kings make war, priests are zealous to increase their wealth, theologians invent syllogisms, monks roam through the world, the commons riot, Erasmus writes colloquies. In short, no calamity is lacking.' Both question and answer are typical of the author's not always genial irony.

The *Colloquies* still entertain and instruct curious readers and are still valued by historians and other scholars who are concerned with the survival (or recovery, as some thought) of classical culture in what used to be known as the Renaissance but is nowadays sometimes identified more modestly as 'early modern Europe.' They are still read also by those 'general readers' who like fiction, whether in short narratives or dialogues. Descriptive titles or labels change with the times. The important thing about a book that absorbed, entertained, instructed, or challenged persons in many countries for generations is that it is a legacy of an epoch – that of Erasmus, Luther, Rabelais, Cervantes, Holbein, Dürer, Lorenzo Valla, Montaigne, Machiavelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Cellini, Calvin – as brilliant and various as are the *Colloquies* themselves.

Erasmus wrote, edited, and translated an extraordinary number of texts: schoolbooks, editions of patristic and other ancient authors, works on language, rhetoric, religious and moral topics. Those books made their mark in his time, and some of them were read and were influential in later years. His editions of patristic writers – Augustine, Jerome, Cyprian, Origen, and others – were indispensable until they were finally overtaken by modern

critical scholarship. His books on language, style, and education (and in its own way the *Colloquies*), made a difference to vernacular practices as well as to the Latin and Greek curriculum for which they were originally designed. Today the writings of Erasmus that are most read are fiction, but fiction written with a moral purpose, not merely as entertainment: *The Praise of Folly* and the *Colloquies* – and, of course, his letters, an incomparable resource for anyone interested in life and events, public and personal, in western Europe between 1480 and 1536. Since throughout his life Erasmus' habit was to turn from his work on books or essays to write letters, formal or informal, to friends or patrons, even bishops, popes, and kings, a reader of both the letters and the *Colloquies* will soon discover how often topics discussed or incidents described in the *Colloquies* echo pages of the letters, and vice versa.

Some of the notes on the *Colloquies* in these volumes refer to ancient sources, others to contemporaries of Erasmus, others to later scholars.¹ Notes are necessary evils, as we are often reminded, and there is no disputing the necessity when a work has so many names, nuances, and allusions requiring identification or explanation. Editions of the *Colloquies* received a few glosses or explications even in Erasmus' lifetime. The important seventeenth-century editions of Petrus Rabus (Rotterdam 1693) and Cornelis Schrevelius (Leiden 1655; repr Amsterdam 1693) were generously annotated, even if the youngest readers of them could not be expected to know much Latin or were still learning it. But we must not underrate the diligence or endurance of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century schoolboys. Rabus' edition, crammed with footnotes, is dedicated to his son, who was seven years old – a boy *optimae spei* – when the book was published. And we must not forget that the *Colloquies* began as exercises in polite conversation for students of Latin.

In the West, for a thousand years and more, Latin was the international language of scholarship and very often of diplomacy, trade, controversy, and the kinds of literature that needed or presupposed a larger than native medium. All of Erasmus' writings, More's *Utopia*, virtually all the writings of the scholastic doctors, and many of those of Luther and Calvin were in Latin. Erasmus is only one of hundreds of writers who were read in Latin for centuries and whose contributions to thought and knowledge still command attention. The decline of Latin in curricula of North American schools and elsewhere has emphasized the need of vernacular translations for persons who do not read Latin sufficiently but wish or need to read Latin authors in translation rather than not read them at all. When the Collected Works of Erasmus was first discussed and the opinions of eminent scholars were sought, one replied that if students should read Erasmus, 'let them learn Latin.' Sound advice, but impractical.²

Although Erasmus strongly and repeatedly advocated vernacular translations of the Scriptures for those who needed them in their native tongues, his own translation and paraphrases and interpretations of the New Testament were in Latin. Elitism? No: reason and necessity. In Erasmus' time a person who could not read, write, and speak Latin could scarcely hope to attain high office in church or state or in a profession. Then and for long afterwards there was little or no choice of studies in school or in the undergraduate years of university training; there were no elective courses. Grammar school was an institution where language, the basis of liberal education, was taught. 'Grammar' and 'Latin' were synonymous; the curriculum of the grammar school was built solidly on Greek and Latin grammar. 'Grammar' was not merely a word defining school for boys of a certain age and at a certain point of mental growth, but signified as well the essential idea governing such a school. For Quintilian grammar is 'the art of speaking correctly and the interpretation of the poets': language and literature.³ The grammarian is a teacher of 'letters,' which to Quintilian and Erasmus meant a teacher of literature.⁴ *Grammatices amor* is 'love of letters,' of literature.⁵ Grammar therefore 'claims primacy of place' in the trivium, and boys must be instructed in Greek and Latin grammar – in that order, Quintilian suggests. Although Greek was prized, Latin usually came first in Renaissance schools. It should be added that a similar education was provided for girls with unusual advantages of birth or background, but such an education was rare – and private.

The better schools began Greek early, but there is no reason to believe that all grammar schools did so. The statutes might recommend or require instruction in both Greek and Latin, but statutes are not always enforced. Then, as now, the schools with most prestige and most patronage set the standards; the rest did what they could. Even if they taught Greek, that could mean nothing more than some chapters from the New Testament.⁶ Yet whatever the quality or range of the instruction, Renaissance theory and practice of secondary education was predominantly and confidently linguistic and rhetorical in substance.⁷

Rules of grammar must be learned and memorized, but Erasmus is emphatic about the importance of understanding that rules come from established usage and are not imposed upon language by logic. To learn parts and functions of speech, syntax, and meanings of words from definitions couched in abstract terms is elusive and frustrating. Erasmus insists in all his writings on education that the teacher first of all, then his pupils, must recognize that meanings and relationships of words in context are disclosed by the passage being examined: 'A true ability to speak correctly is best fostered both by conversing and consorting with those who speak correctly and by the habitual reading of the best stylists. Among the latter the first to

be imbibed should be those whose diction, apart from its refinement, will also entice learners by a certain charm of subject-matter.⁸ Like Lorenzo Valla, whom he valued so highly, Erasmus went to classical texts, to the authors he regarded as supreme models of colloquial Latinity, not to philosophers, to find meanings and connotations of words and usage. How does Cicero use this word? What is the effect of that expression in Terence?⁹

When we read what Erasmus writes about methods of teaching and the daily routines of reading and writing, we notice his common sense, his realism, his resourcefulness, even his sense of humour. He was never a sentimentalist, but a reformer with strict though not unreasonable standards. He believed strongly in making games or contests of lessons, and denounced corporal punishment by schoolmasters (it is hard to find a drawing of a medieval or Renaissance schoolroom that does not show the master's birch rod beside his chair). He believed wholly in the civilizing values of good education, which seemed to him, next to religion, the most urgent need of individuals and society. His standards for pupils, teachers – and parents – were high. We do not hear of parents or pedagogues of his time who promised that school would be fun. But a boy in a school controlled by Erasmian principles was indeed fortunate.

II

In November 1518, a small octavo of eighty pages entitled *Familiarium colloquiorum formulae* was published by the Froben press in Basel, bearing the familiar dove and serpents device on the title-page. But Erasmus was not pleased by this unexpected gift. He professed ignorance and annoyance as to how the manuscript came into Johann Froben's possession and why Froben had published it without consulting the author.

These *formulae* or 'patterns' of polite conversation and good writing in Latin were compiled and dictated by Erasmus for his tutorial pupils in Paris 'more than twenty years ago,' he says in the preface to the March 1519 edition (Ep 909). The manuscript or a copy seems to have come into the hands of a friend and colleague of his Paris years, Augustinus Vincentius Caminadus, whom Erasmus met early in 1497. Like Erasmus, Caminadus tutored a few pupils, and he eked out a living as an obscure hack-writer. He shared lodgings with Erasmus for six months or longer in 1497–8. They fell out for a time, until poverty forced them to share rooms again. Caminadus lent money to Erasmus, who in turn lent some of his papers to Caminadus, an arrangement certain to lead to trouble. As early as September 1500, Erasmus complained of Caminadus' failure to return copies of Erasmus' compositions to him.¹⁰ Then in 1519, after having to accept unwillingly the publication



Familiarium colloquiorum formulae title-page
Basel: Froben, November 1518
Gemeentebibliotheek, Rotterdam

of his *Formulae* as a fact, he accused Caminadus of responsibility for it. For a manuscript of the *Formulae* held by Caminadus appears to have reached Lambertus Hollonius, a young scholar of Liège known to Erasmus, and at this time working at the Froben press in Basel.¹¹

Exactly how Hollonius came to possess such a manuscript – whether by gift or guile or purchase or loan or theft from Caminadus – is not known. Many years later (February 1536), Erasmus recalled writing the *Formulae* as a light-hearted exercise and said he did not remember how Hollonius obtained them, adding that he himself had never kept a copy of the manuscript.¹² Even though Froben's greeting to the reader and Beatus Rhenanus' preface make completely clear that Erasmus had not seen the text, he resented the uncorrected errors in that first edition.¹³ He refrained from criticizing Froben, however, and instead blamed Caminadus and later Lambertus Hollonius. An amended edition appeared in March 1519 from the press of Dirk Martens in Louvain. Erasmus made a few more corrections in the Froben edition of May 1519. In the October–December 1519 edition, again from Martens' press, the publisher added a brief preface of his own, assuring the reader that publication of the *Formulae* and similar books was a service to learning, for the only way to speak well is to practise speaking well. This edition also includes some verses by Conradus Goclenius praising the *Formulae*.¹⁴

Possibly Erasmus himself had considered publishing his early dialogues. In February 1518 he wrote to an English friend, Roger Wentford, asking him to send any 'humorous and convivial dialogues' he might have, since Erasmus wanted to revise and enlarge them for publication as a memorial of their friendship (Ep 772). Two months later he wrote again (Ep 833), thanking Wentford for returning some sheets but chiding him for failure to send the main (*praecipium*) dialogue. What this was is not known. We hear no more of Wentford, nor did Erasmus dedicate anything to him. Whatever Erasmus planned, if anything, Froben anticipated by publishing the *Formulae* in November 1518.

Dirk Martens' edition of March 1519 is regarded as the first authorized edition of the *Familiarium colloquiorum formulae*. 'Authorized' is a useful but limited and often ambiguous term. No international copyright existed in Erasmus' day. Governments – local, national, provincial, or territorial – might grant to a printer or printer-publisher the sole right to print a book within its borders for a definite number of years.¹⁵ Such privileges were common. Enforcement of the right depended on the interest of the government and the vigilance of the printer or bookseller. Governments took licensing seriously when political interests were involved or ecclesiastical authorities issued indexes of prohibited books. Such prohibitions interfered with Erasmus' *Colloquies* and some of his other books more than once, as we shall see, but

Eraſmus Roterodamus ſtudioſæ iuuetuti

S. D.

PRodiit nuper libellus quidā colloquiorū fami-
liariū, quē mihi tribuunt, & edūcitur a pueris
meo nomine, vt audio. Qui etiāmnū ſi maxime is
eſſet, qui Latinæ linguæ caſtimoniā doceret, nolim
tamen mihi aſcribi, quod meū nō ſit. Nunc cum
multa ſint admixta, quæ merā barbariē oleāt, pau-
cis rem, vt habet aperiā. Fateor me quondā cū es-
ſem Lutetię ante annos plus viginti diſtaſſe neſcio
quas nugas, Si quando libuiſſet a cœna garrire ad
foculū, & diſcinctū (vt ait Flaccus) ludere de for-
mulis congreſſus cotidiani, rurſum de ſermonibus
conuiuialibus. Ad hæc ſcripſerā craſſiſſimā para-
phraſim in elegantias Laurentii Vallæ, nec mirū,
lapidi ſcripſerā verius q̄ homini. Quanq̄ hoc quo-
q̄ fruſtra, vſq̄ adeo plūbeū erat ingeniū vetuli pſi-
taci. Præterea iam tum copię qualecūq̄ ſimulacrū
delinieſcā. Ad hæc cœptus erat liber de conſcriben-
dis epistoſis, Item alius aduerſus barbaros, quem
quorūdā opera perdidi. Poſtremo quotidie cala-
mum in familiaribus epistoſis excercebā, quiduis
nugans apud hunc aut apud illū amiculū, & effuti-
ens, qualia ſolemus a poculis inter amiculos, &
cōgerrones alter in alterius ſinū effundere. Huius
modi nugarū inſatiabilis lauerna ſemper fuit Au-
guſtinus Camynadus, q̄ cū mihi tū erat domeſtica

con

when we refer to 'authorized edition' we mean permission or consent, by the writer, for a designated printer to have exclusive rights to print and distribute his book. Sometimes, and probably many times, this permission consisted of an understanding between author and printer, an oral rather than written agreement. We speak with confidence of the Froben edition of the *Colloquies* in March 1533 as the final authorized edition because it was the last issued in Erasmus' lifetime by the printer of all but two previous editions.¹⁶

After the first edition of *Familiarium colloquiorum formulae* in 1518, the book was reprinted at least thirty times before March 1522. The most significant of those early issues were the two revised and corrected editions brought out by Martens in March and between October and December 1519. As for others, one printer copied another printer's work, sometimes with trivial changes. Such reprints came from Paris, Leipzig, Antwerp, Vienna, Cracow, Mainz, Augsburg, Cologne, Louvain, Basel, and Strasbourg. Slight as it was when compared with the final authorized edition published by the Froben press in March 1533, the little book of November 1518 was a harbinger of the *Colloquies*' prosperous future.

The November 1518 edition contained examples of polite, idiomatic Latin phrases of salutation and brief interchanges of conversation or inquiry and reply, followed by dialogues (pages a3 to 63 [misnumbered 53]). Next comes *Brevis de copia praeceptio* (64–74), which was the first version of what became *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum* (1512), one of Erasmus' most successful books.¹⁷ Finally comes *De ratione studii epistola protreptica* (75–9 = Ep 56). This is a short admonition to a young student on the right methods of study, with hints on health and exercise, care in selecting the best teacher, and learning the best things first in order not to waste time by having to unlearn erroneous things.¹⁸ Most of the material in the 1518 book can be found again in later *formulae* and dialogues in the *Colloquies* of 1522 or in *De conscribendis epistolis*. *De ratione studii epistola protreptica*, addressed to Christian Northoff, remained in the editions of the *Formulae* until the July–August 1522 edition; later it was transferred to *De conscribendis epistolis*. Two other brief pieces, *Quis sit modus repetendae lectionis*, on how to review a lesson, and a few lines on whether studying alone or with others is better, likewise appeared in the March 1522 edition but thereafter in *De conscribendis epistolis*.¹⁹ They were first printed in a Froben edition of the *Colloquies* in February 1519.

Despite many changes and additions between November 1518 and March 1522, the text of the *Familiarum colloquiorum formulae* retains enough of its original character to show clearly what the earliest *formulae* were like: phrases, with variations, for greeting friends, inquiring after ordinary affairs of life, and making proper acknowledgments or replies required by

social decorum. This was something that Erasmus took very seriously, for like Colet he believed that 'our daily conversation reveals our character.'²⁰ Scholastic *vulgaria*, *formulae*, and dialogues had a long history before Erasmus wrote, although most of them are forgotten now,²¹ and Erasmus' *Colloquies* had two worthy and powerful rivals after his death. The first was the *Latinae linguae exercitatio* (Paris 1540) by Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540), eminent Spanish humanist, a scholar of high repute, and for many years a friend of Erasmus. This book was published fifty times in the sixteenth century. It has schoolroom scenes and pages on religion, morals, and manners. Vives does not have Erasmus' light touch, but his dialogues deserved their popularity. The other rival was the *Colloquiorum scholasticorum libri quatuor* (Geneva 1564) of Maturin Cordier (1480–1564). Cordier's colloquies were very popular in the second half of the sixteenth century and in the seventeenth century may have been even more popular than Erasmus'. They were characterized by moral earnestness and pietistic language approved in Lutheran and Calvinistic schools.²² Although some of the rhetorical and grammatical nuances may be obscured or lost in translation, Erasmus' *Formulae* are well worth having. They are apprentice work, but even the apprentice work of a master is bound to be of interest to his admirers. The historian of Renaissance education prizes them as illustrations of contemporary principles and methods of pedagogy and finds in them much to compare with the *vulgaria* made by sixteenth-century grammarians.²³ Moreover the *formulae*, even when simple, repetitious, and artless, afford authentic glimpses of sixteenth-century daily life.

Erasmus never hints that he planned a whole series of dialogues. He wrote a few, evidently liked them, as many readers did, and then from time to time wrote more and added these to the growing collection – a satisfaction to him and undoubtedly to Johann Froben. All the time Erasmus spent in writing more colloquies had to be stolen from the tasks of scholarship, from writing the books that were his life's work – essays, translations, editions, and commentaries on religion, education, philology, moral and political questions. New colloquies appeared until the final edition issued in March 1533, but more in the period beginning in November 1518 and ending in March 1524 than in all other years between August–September 1524 and March 1533.

Minor changes were made as the *Colloquies* matured. Running titles or heads at the top of each page of text were introduced in the August–September 1524 edition. In February 1526 '*Formulae*' was dropped from the title-page and *Opus* substituted. We have noted that some material printed in the early editions was shifted later to other publications; the slight *Quis sit modus repetendae lectionis* and *De ratione studii epistola protreptica*, for example, were placed in *De conscribendis epistolis* after the edition of March 1522. *Brevis de*

copia praeceptio, which might have been absorbed later by *De copia*, remained, though somewhat out of place. There were seventeen editions containing one or more new texts printed for the first time in the series (as distinguished from others that did not have substantive new material or major and significant editorial changes) between November 1518 and March 1533.²⁴ The colloquies translated in these volumes number sixty-one, plus Erasmus' 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*,' which was printed at the end of the June 1526 edition of the *Colloquies*, where it follows the *Scholia*.

The edition of March 1533 (Basel: Hieronymus Froben and Nicolaus Episcopius) was the final text and, for every reason, the basis for the Basel edition of 1538–40 and the Leclerc edition of 1703–6. Froben editions were also the sources of reprints by other printers, who were eager to adopt a title that sold well. Besides the March 1533 edition, editions by five other printers appeared in that same year, one in Antwerp (Grapheus) with the final seven colloquies only; others in Lyon (Trechsel), Cologne (Gymnicus), and two others whose place and printers are uncertain, though the date is 1533.²⁵

It is not surprising that a text used by many young readers and containing numerous allusions should acquire glosses or *scholia*, explanatory notes on mythological, historical, or linguistic matters, though the original 1518 edition printed none (it did, however, print a few French and German phrases to compare with the Latin ones; see the introduction to 'Patterns of Informal Conversation' 6). The *Scholia* or *Aliquot loca explicata* first appeared in the June 1526 Froben edition; they were regularly reprinted, with some additions, in most subsequent editions by Froben and his competitors. In the March 1533 edition there were about 420 *scholia*, filling thirty-six pages between 'The Epicurean' and 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*.' The *scholia* were anonymous. Some of them may have come from Erasmus, but it is thought that most were supplied by Sigismundus Gelenius of the Froben staff. Important editions of the 1530s (Lyon: Gryphius 1531; Basel: Hieronymus Froben and Nicolaus Episcopius 1531; Cologne: Gymnicus 1532; Basel: Hieronymus Froben and Nicolaus Episcopius 1533; Cologne: Gymnicus 1533, 1534, 1535, 1537) printed them and added a few new ones.

Another set of notes, also from 1526, was made by Christoph Hegendorff (1500–40), who wrote a *Dialogi pueriles* (1520) that went through several editions. It was sometimes printed with the well-known *Paedologia* of Petrus Mosellanus, an admirer of Erasmus and author of *Methodus conscribendi epistolas*, an imitation of Erasmus' treatise on the same subject. Hegendorff's *Explicatio locorum implicatissimorum in Colloquiis Erasmi* (Haguenau 1526) comments on fifty-eight allusions and quotations, two-thirds of them in 'Patterns of Informal Conversation,' the rest in 'The Godly Feast.'²⁶

Long after publication of the March 1533 edition, a new dialogue was added by Petrus Rabus of Rotterdam in an edition of the *Colloquies* issued by Renier Leers (Rotterdam 1693). This dialogue, *Conflictus Thaliae et Barbariei*, fills six pages after 'The Epicurean' and is accompanied by two brief prefaces by Rabus, who had already published a Dutch translation of the *Conflictus* in 1684.²⁷ There is no evidence that Erasmus ever intended to place it in the *Colloquies*. The contest between Thalia, Muse of comedy and sometimes of lyric poetry, and her two companions, Calliope and Melpomene, against their adversary Barbarism is a war of words over ignorance, pedantry, and boorishness as opposed to culture, elegance, and literature. Thalia ridicules the crudeness and hostility to humanities that are the typical vices of pedantry. The colloquy 'A Meeting of the Philological Society' was a skirmish in this war.

III

In addition to the *formulae* of polite conversation, the November 1518 edition included short dialogues containing the outlines of plot and characterization, which the advantage of hindsight enable us to say anticipate the future *Colloquies*. The book as we know it – a book of dialogues with developed themes and characters and a great variety of subjects – really begins with the two editions of 1522. In these and the later successively enlarged editions Erasmus opens a window on the world he knew, a Vanity Fair, peopled with all sorts and conditions of men and women. We learn of their experiences, their vices and virtues, follies, and troubles. An unusual book, to say the least, for it began as a modest manual to help boys improve their colloquial Latin, but it became literature, written for adults as well as boys and for women as well as men. And although even the original *Formulae* might be said to have a moral purpose – education for Erasmus always did – that purpose is more evident in the portraits of deceit, envy, hypocrisy, greed, and violence that engage our attention in the later colloquies.

The author had a dramatist's eye for situations and scenes, but what he writes are not dramas in any formal sense, for the action is recalled or implied or described; we 'see' it or imagine it through the author's art in setting it forth within dialogue. None the less, like much good fiction it has the potentiality of being staged, of becoming theatre. Although Erasmus introduced no new literary forms, he excelled in those he favoured most: dialogues and orations, whether rhetorical exercises or declamations seriously intended to persuade readers. Dialogue in the colloquies, whether short or long and whatever its subjects, may conform to certain well-known types or precedents. For example, the length and seriousness of 'The Godly Feast' may remind some readers of the philosophical dialogues of Cicero or Augustine or Boethius.

Other colloquies – ‘The Well-to-Do Beggars,’ ‘The New Mother,’ ‘A Fish Diet,’ ‘The Seraphic Funeral,’ ‘The Epicurean’ – are also serious in that they discuss important events, ideas, and debatable questions, but they differ among themselves in the presence or absence of satire, humour, number and character of speakers, and so on. Lucian was another but quite different kind of model, for he was both satirical and serious, a master of mockery and wit.

During Erasmus’ second visit to England (late 1505–June 1506), he and Thomas More amused themselves by translating some of Lucian’s writings into Latin. Which one ‘discovered’ Lucian some years earlier we do not know, nor do we know who proposed the common enterprise of translating him. More translated Lucian’s *Cynicus*, *Menippus*, *Philopseudes*, and *Tyrannicida*. Erasmus too translated *Tyrannicida*, and both he and More wrote declamations replying to it. Erasmus translated twenty-eight pieces.²⁸

Evidence of Lucian’s influence is probable or certain in many pages of the *Colloquies*. ‘Charon’ is a good example of how imitative of Lucianic style a colloquy could be without diminishment of Erasmus’ own ingenuity (a Lyon 1528 edition of More’s and Erasmus’ translations of Lucian even included Erasmus’ ‘Charon’ as well). His satire of soldiers and of war (‘The Soldier and the Carthusian,’ ‘Military Affairs,’ ‘The Funeral,’ ‘Cyclops’) recall Lucian’s sketches of Hannibal, Alexander, and other conquerors. Erasmus writes amusingly (but not irreverently, he would insist) of the management or mismanagement of earthly affairs by heavenly powers in ‘The New Mother’; the letters from heaven in ‘Exorcism’ and ‘A Pilgrimage for Religion’s Sake’ are Lucianic jokes.²⁹ Like Lucian, Erasmus was fond of *jeux d’esprit* and rhetorical tricks (‘The Imposture,’ ‘Non-Sequiturs,’ ‘Echo’); and, again like Lucian, he despises impostors and boasters (‘The Liar and the Man of Honour’). Lucian’s compulsive mockery of the gods was part of his stock in trade, expressive of his atheism. It was also a source of the disapproval of Erasmus by some persons who were the more suspicious of him because he translated, and therefore must have admired, this notorious writer. Erasmus was a Lucian, Luther declared – in fact worse; Erasmus did more harm: ‘I prefer Lucian to Erasmus.’³⁰

Frequently a subject is treated informally but effectively in one or more colloquies and at another time at greater length, and with more organization and more immediate seriousness, in an essay or treatise. Consider the similarities, for example, between what is said about making vows to go on pilgrimage in ‘Rash Vows’ and ‘A Pilgrimage for Religion’s Sake’ and what is said on these topics in *Enchiridion*; compare ‘The Well-to-Do Beggars’ with *De esu carniū* and *Ecclesiastes* on ecclesiastical ordinances, the discussion of the meaning of scriptural passages in ‘The Godly Feast’ and ‘The Sermon’ with Erasmus’ methods in his *Annotations on the New Testament*, ‘A Fish Diet’ with

Institutio principis christiani on civil government, 'An Examination concerning the Faith' with *Explanatio symboli* on Christian doctrine; set 'Military Affairs,' 'The Soldier and the Carthusian,' and 'Charon' beside *Querela pacis* and *De bello Turcico*, 'Marriage' and 'The New Mother' beside *Institutio christiani matrimonii*, 'The Funeral' beside *De praeparatione ad mortem*. Such comparisons can tell us something about Erasmus' arguments, learning, and strategies in different kinds of discourse.

The theme that gets most attention in the *Colloquies* is religion ('Rash Vows,' 'The Godly Feast,' 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage,' 'The Repentant Girl,' 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin,' 'An Examination concerning the Faith,' 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake,' 'A Fish Diet,' 'The Funeral,' 'Cyclops,' 'The Sermon,' 'The Seraphic Funeral,' to name no others). This is no surprise, though we notice how many different levels of treatment and how many different aspects of contemporary religion are involved: pilgrimages, images, monasticism, doctrinal disputes, superstitions, canon law, anticlericalism, piety true and false. For Erasmus the varieties of religious experience run from the extremes of devotion to the grossest of superstitions, from Christian scholarship to sheer pedantry.

Erasmus was always concerned about war and peace ('Military Affairs,' 'The Soldier and the Carthusian,' 'A Fish Diet,' 'Charon'). He was also interested in the New World, and he was not optimistic about how Europeans would treat the natives in the Americas.³¹

His delight in stories about clever people who play tricks on others, taking advantage of their simplicity while doing them no real harm, is evident in 'The Exorcism,' 'Marriage,' and 'Alchemy'; but he is severe towards those who practise deception and lying ('The Liar and the Man of Honour,' 'The Cheating Horse-Dealer,' 'Beggar Talk,' 'Things and Names,' 'The Knight without a Horse').

He writes often on women, sensitively, at times humorously, cleverly, wisely. The charming and witty heroine of 'Courtship,' Maria, has the virtues and intelligence of the heroines in Shakespeare's romantic comedies. In 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' Catharine, who is very unlike Maria, longs to become a nun and finally wins her parents' reluctant consent. At the age of sixteen, she enters the convent but is quickly disillusioned. This colloquy teaches a lesson Erasmus never tires of repeating in his pages on religion and ethics: that one should not commit oneself to a course of life until sufficiently mature.³² In 'Marriage' a happily married young woman advises a friend who is miserable and resentful of her husband on the practical secrets of successful marriage (for keep in mind, she warns, that there is no divorce). Give your husband no reason to complain and put up with minor faults, she suggests, and illustrates her counsel by anecdotes of successful marriages,

one of them that of Thomas More, although his name is not used.³³ In 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' an ignorant cleric is contemptuous of a woman who is studious and who by her intelligence and wit makes the abbot look like the fool he is. The conversation illustrates not merely what women could do if they were educated (this woman's husband encouraged her) but what sorry creatures lazy clergy could be.

'A Marriage in Name Only' condemns the appalling cruelty of parents who give their only daughter in marriage to a syphilitic suitor. The selfish parents seem blind to reason. This dialogue could not have been misunderstood when it was published in March 1529, or read without arousing emotion, for by then everyone knew about the ravages of the pox, syphilis. (One cannot read it today without thinking immediately of the new pox and equally dreadful plague, AIDS.) Erasmus gives a grim description of the malady, but his purpose ethically and emotionally is to shock the reader by the revolting behaviour of the parents.

A lifelong bachelor, Erasmus creates characters who are convincingly expert on rearing children. He has clear views about the importance of mothers' nursing their own babies, not permitting nursemaids to do it for them; in 'The New Mother' a learned friend gives the young mother a lecture on Aristotle's doctrine of the soul to support this opinion. Fabulla knows nothing about Aristotle and even less about the soul, but since she is intelligent and a good listener she asks the right questions. When the lecture comes to a close, she asks the visitor to return in due time and tell her how to educate the child. What Fabulla's friend might have said on that later occasion – Erasmus' ideal of education – is set forth in 'The Whole Duty of Youth,' which presents a young student who is a model of obedience and good conduct at school and at home. 'Early to Rise' and 'The Art of Learning' give sound advice for living and learning; 'Off to School' is about young pupils who are having some difficulties.

We meet in the *Colloquies* characters closely related to some of those described in the *Praise of Folly*. 'The Sermon' displays a foolish, ignorant, and malevolent friar who attacks Erasmus. 'A Meeting of the Philological Society' ridicules pretentious pedants who are smug about their merits, of which they seem to have none. 'The Funeral' has a memorable cast: a corrupt general who is trying to buy or bribe his way into heaven, a gaggle of friars pestering the dying man for favours while assuring him of the validity of their services, a surly priest who derides the mendicants; later we see a sensible and dutiful priest and a layman, a true Christian, who at his death puts his trust in the promises of Scripture rather than in men or mendicants. The contrast between the first part of the colloquy – a noisy, angry, selfish, and scandalous scene – and the second – a peaceful and devout gathering, where the *ars moriendi* is

honourable and honoured – is an extraordinary *tour de force*, seldom equalled elsewhere by Erasmus.

Editors and commentators worry about sources, which may make a difference to our understanding of a text, though sometimes the source, even if interesting, is unimportant. What were the sources of the incidents, the facts, and the fancies that found their way into Erasmus' shaping of created characters and of persons explicitly named in the *Colloquies*? The short answer is: Erasmus' artistic imagination. Some of the names in the original 1518 edition are those of Erasmus' pupils or acquaintances in Holland or Paris. Christian Northoff was, without question, one of the boys for whom the first *formulae* were made. Caminadus (Augustine) was older and had pupils of his own, but apparently received instruction from Erasmus. Similarly some of the names in new material added in March 1522 are those of acquaintances we can identify. About others we can guess, but such common names as George, Peter, Henry, Nicholas, and John are poor clues to confident identification. When describing people he dislikes, for example the ignorant abbot in 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady,' or the unlearned 'learned men' of 'A Meeting of the Philological Society,' Erasmus may be using names that a person acquainted with him could have identified. Sometimes he makes the disguise transparent, as when he is writing about hostile critics in Paris or Louvain.

Sometimes Erasmus keeps close to actual experiences or occasions of which we have evidence, or to passages found in his reading and kept in mind until years later. 'The Young Man and the Harlot' is an adaptation of the ancient legend of Thaïs, the penitent harlot, long known because it was in the medieval *Golden Legend*. Other colloquies or passages in them are based partly on fact, partly on invention.³⁴ Some colloquies were written within a year or two after an event that interested or disturbed Erasmus. 'The Seraphic Funeral,' published in September 1531, was inspired, if that is the word for it, by the death of his enemy Alberto Pio in January 1531. 'The Sermon,' printed in the same edition, satirizes a Franciscan who had denounced Erasmus in a sermon at the Diet of Augsburg in the summer of 1530. But some colloquies were published years after an event. 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake,' for example, was based on Erasmus' pilgrimages to Walsingham in 1512 (and possibly a second visit between 1512 and 1514) and to Canterbury between 1512 and 1514, yet his account was not published until February 1526. Why? Too busy with other things, Erasmus might have said, as we all do.

IV

Evidence of the popularity of the *Colloquies* is indisputable.³⁵ Booksellers' records are not so plentiful or accessible as we would like, but existing ones

confirm its steady sale. One example is the daybook of John Dorne, bookseller in Oxford, for ten months in 1520. It shows that Dorne sold about 175 copies of works by Erasmus and that 48 of these were copies of the *Colloquies*. An Edinburgh bookseller had 625 copies of the *Colloquies* in stock in 1577; one in York bought 100 copies of an 'Epitome' of the *Colloquies*.³⁶

Allusions in Erasmus' letters confirm the unusual success of the book. Erasmus told a correspondent in 1529 that Simon de Colines, a printer in Paris, had produced an edition of 24,000 copies of the *Colloquies*; 'it was in everybody's hands,' he added.³⁷ Erasmus was pleased but properly sceptical. The average edition of a book that could be called 'general literature' was at this time between 500 and 1,500 copies. A printer's experience with a particular author and a particular title in circulation since 1518 would surely have affected his expectations of the success of a new edition. But that he could risk an edition of 24,000 copies is too much to believe.

An inventory of the 150 volumes belonging to the *curé* of a village near Antwerp in 1537 lists twenty-eight by Erasmus, two of them copies of the *Colloquies*.³⁸ In the Latin school at Basel, which Thomas Platter the elder reorganized in 1541, the second class (grade) read the shorter colloquies of Erasmus three times a week.³⁹ In Melanchthon's curriculum (1527) the second grade also read the *Colloquies*.

Research by Marcella and Paul Grendler has clarified the fate of the *Colloquies* in Italy; we now know of important records of Erasmus holdings in major Italian and Vatican libraries and have a better understanding of the rather complex reactions of Italians to the *Colloquies* and other books by Erasmus.⁴⁰ Especially in the generation after his death his writings were impugned by the Index. Silvana Seidel Menchi's studies have brought deserved attention to this neglected subject.⁴¹ Work has also been done on the diffusion of the *Colloquies* in the Netherlands.⁴² Although Erasmus never visited Spain, on more occasions than he liked he had correspondents there, some hostile, others supportive in that most Catholic of kingdoms. The history of Erasmus' fortunes in Spain is told in detail and with authority by Marcel Bataillon.⁴³ Works by Erasmus followed the Spanish to the New World. Among books wanted by a government official in Santo Domingo in 1536 were Erasmus' *De praeparatione ad mortem*, *Lingua*, *Querela pacis*, and the *Colloquies*. 'Un sermón de Erasmo en romance' was also ordered; which work this was is uncertain. In 1564 there is mention of '6 *Enquiridiones* de Erasmo en romance'; in 1572 a member of a religious order inquires about 'un libro intitulado *Familiarium colloquiorum formulae de Erasmo*.'⁴⁴

The numerous vernacular translations of the *Colloquies* in the sixteenth and later centuries form an interesting chapter in the transmission of Erasmus'

work. These versions testify to the appeal of the dialogues and are instructive as specimens of literary tastes and linguistic skills.

For readers with a strong interest in Tudor England the *Colloquies* offer a gift,⁴⁵ since four of the best colloquies have close connections with England and the English. In 'The Whole Duty of Youth' Erasmus writes of St Paul's School as seen through the experience of a pupil (said to be Thomas Lupset) who is a paragon of piety and duty. The colloquy pays tribute to Erasmus' friend Colet, who refounded the school. 'Exorcism' tells of a practical joke in which More plays a leading role. In another colloquy, 'Sympathy,' one scene takes place at More's home. In 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake,' Colet is again involved, for he is Erasmus' fellow pilgrim on the visit to Canterbury.

In addition to the English versions of these four colloquies others surviving are: two versions of 'Marriage,' 'Cyclops,' 'Things and Names,' 'Courtship,' 'The Young Man and the Harlot,' 'The Funeral,' 'The Seraphic Funeral,' 'The Epicurean,' 'Inns,' and 'Alchemy.'⁴⁶

The first seventeenth-century translation to appear was William Burton's *Seven Dialogues both pithie and profitable* (London 1606). Burton, a Puritan divine, promised his readers, 'If thou wilt but enter into them, thou shalt find so delightfull and fruitfull a walke, that thou wilt hardly retire untill thou hast gone through.' They will likewise perceive 'how little cause the Papists have to boast of Erasmus as a man of their side.' The colloquies Englished are 'A Fish Diet,' 'The Shipwreck,' 'The Young Man and the Harlot,' 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake,' 'The New Mother,' 'Marriage,' and 'The Funeral.' 'H.M. Gent' (Henry Munday?) translated all the *Colloquies* (London 1671), 'A Work of very great Use to such as desire to attain an exact knowledge of the Latin Tongue,' though he does not provide a Latin text with his translation. Thomas Heywood's *Pleasant Dialogues and Dramma's, Selected out of Lucian, Erasmus, Textor, Ovid, Etc.* (London 1617) contains Erasmus' 'The Shipwreck' and 'Courtship.' Sir Roger L'Estrange's *Twenty Select Colloquies out of Erasmus Roterodamus, Pleasantly Representing Several Superstitious Levities That were Crept into the Church of Rome in His Days* appeared in 1679/80 (London). A 1689 edition added 'Charon' and 'The Old Men's Chat,' and a 1699 edition added seven more, but not mainly about religion. Another edition is a 1711 reprint of the 1699 edition, with six additional dialogues translated by Tom Brown and a seventh that is in part a pastiche from the *Formulae*, and the rest by Tom Brown.

Two translations published in the eighteenth century also had a long run. A schoolmaster of Hull, John Clarke, brought out the Latin text with a literal translation of ten colloquies (Nottingham 1720). Printers seem to have lost count of the number of editions issued. A reprint from Gloucester (1800) is said on the title-page to be the twenty-third, yet one from Philadelphia (1804)

SEVEN DIALOGVES BOTH PITHIE and profitable.

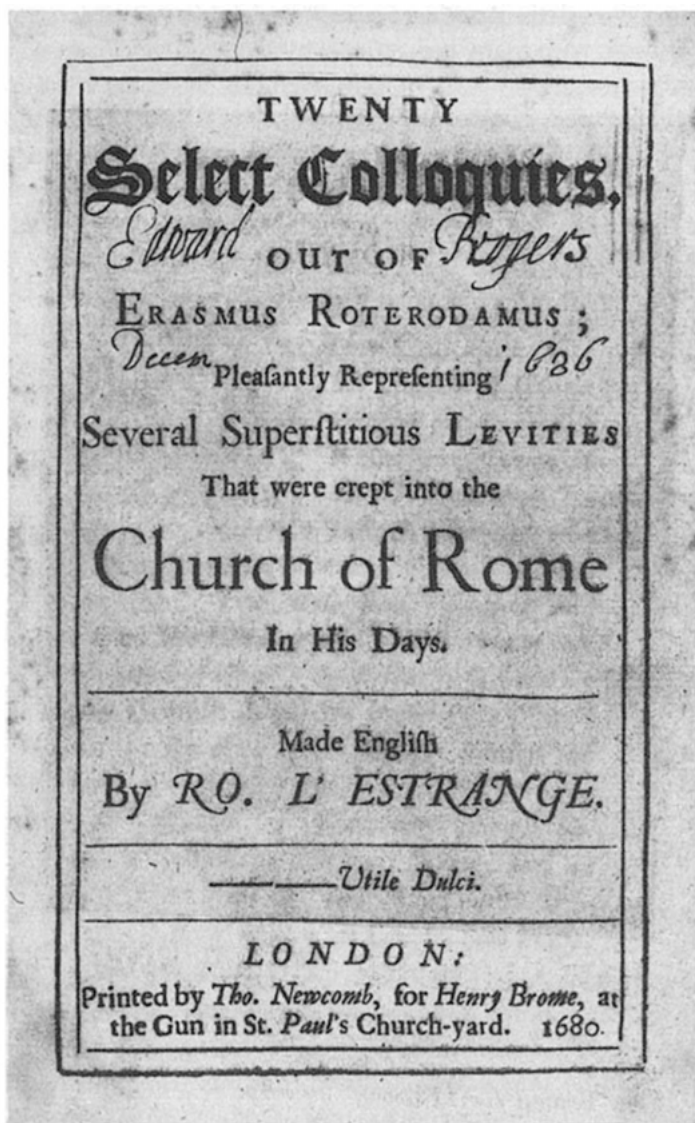
- The {
1 Is of the right vse of things in different.
2 Sheweth what comfort Poperie affordeth in
time of daunger.
3 Is betweene a good Woman and a Shrew.
4 Is of the conversion of a Harlot.
5 Is of putting forth Children to Nurse.
6 Is of a Popish Pilgrimage.
7 Is of a Popish Funerall.

By W. B.



LONDON.

Printed for *Nicholas Ling*, and are to bee sold at his shop
in *Saint Dunstons Church-yard* in *Fleet-*
streete. 1606.



Title-page of *Twenty Select Colloquies out of Erasmus Roterodamus*
... made English by Ro[ger] L'Estrange
London: Thomas Newcomb for Henry Brome 1680
Reproduced by permission of the Huntington Library,
San Marino, California

is called the twentieth. Another from Philadelphia (1810) is called simply 'A New Edition, with many corrections' by James Ross, 'Professor of Greek and Latin Languages in the City of Philadelphia.' A few years after Clarke's translation appeared, Nathan Bailey brought out *All the Familiar Colloquies of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam Concerning Men, Manners, and Things* (London 1725; 2nd ed 1733, with the same preface). Bailey, a Dissenting schoolmaster, is remembered for his English dictionary, said to be the foundation of Johnson's. His version of the *Colloquies* avoids the extravagances of L'Estrange's and the occasional awkwardness of others. He was a patient scholar whose accomplishment deserves praise. The 'Life and Beauty of Erasmus in Latin,' Bailey says in his preface, 'is often inimitable in the English Language,' but he hopes that 'by comparing this version with the Original, they may be thereby assisted, to more perfectly understand, and familiarize themselves with those Beauties of the Latin Language, in which Erasmus in these *Colloquies* abounds.' He kept as close as he could to Erasmus' Latin without compromising his own English. Bailey's was the only complete translation between H.M.'s (1671) and Craig Thompson's (Chicago 1965), on which the present version is based.

There were a number of Spanish translations. Whatever uncertainties remain concerning the translator of one or two colloquies, the publication of at least eleven or twelve between 1527 and 1532 is an impressive example of the attraction of the *Colloquies* for Spanish followers of Erasmian piety and preaching.⁴⁷

V

The record of editions, reprints, and translations is irrefutable evidence of the distribution, popularity, and use of the *Colloquies*. Approval was not, however, universal. Juan Maldonado (c 1485–1554), a soldier, theologian, writer on religious topics, and one of a group of Erasmians in Burgos, will serve as an example of the variety of reactions Erasmus' works evoked. In September 1526 he sent a long letter to Erasmus (Ep 1742), assuring him that many men and – he emphasizes this – women, privately and not in the presence of monks, favour his teachings. They read his books, especially the *Colloquies*, but Erasmus should be aware that there is strong disapproval as well as acceptance of him in Spain. Some condemn confession that is not made to monks; others are eager to learn more about Erasmus and from him. In a letter dated 30 March 1527 (Ep 1805) Erasmus defends his writings and denies any animus against Spanish or other critics. Maldonado wrote again in November 1527. This time he reported a conversation with a Dominican who praised Erasmus perfunctorily but then began to express doubts about

his soundness, citing a few passages that troubled him and finally saying that 'if only ten lines could be excised from his works, the rest of the contents would be beneficial to Christians.'⁴⁸ The friar does not say which 'ten lines' he means. These two letters from Maldonado are patently sincere in their admiration, but by 1534 he too had changed his mind about Erasmus; henceforth he regarded the *Colloquies* as dangerous.

The friar mentioned by Maldonado was not the only one to be offended by passages in the *Colloquies*. Erasmus wrote to John Longland, bishop of Lincoln, 'The book annoys monks (falsely so called) because in it young people are warned against being in too great a hurry to plunge into a monastic vocation they won't find their way out of. And it has other matter not calculated to serve the selfish interest of pseudo-monks but profitable to the young.'⁴⁹

Not all the monks and friars met with in the *Colloquies* are dissolute or worldly; there are for instance the two Franciscans in 'The Well-to-Do Beggars' and the Carthusian in 'The Soldier and the Carthusian.' But the other kind come to mind more readily. The reader is left with an impression of the failure of the religious orders to justify their claims or to cope with the spiritual ills of the times. Rightly or wrongly, Erasmus was long remembered as a sort of *malleus monachorum*. His differences with the religious orders cost him many a controversy, took valuable time from other tasks, and seemed never to end.⁵⁰

The *Colloquies* was disapproved by ecclesiastical officials as early as 1522, when Nicolaas Baechem, the Carmelite theologian at Louvain, found four passages in the new edition that he labelled heretical.⁵¹ Their hostility sprang from a conviction that this book contained some obscenities and scenes and remarks that were not fit for youth, and, moreover, passages about confession, fasting, vows, or the Virgin Mary offensive to pious minds – a conviction expressed in the admonition Erasmus received from Cuthbert Tunstall, the well-disposed bishop of London and afterwards of Durham, in October 1529:

I have already warned you about cleansing the *Colloquies* of impurities, since there are things in them that offend many persons who are well informed – things on fasts, rites, decrees of the church in 'A Fish Diet,' pilgrimages, invocation of saints in emergencies – which accuse you of scornful disparagement. You could easily correct matters of this kind in a way that would remove every instance of offence in your past.⁵²

Lively passages on friars and monks, on pilgrimages, fasting, clerical immorality, and superstitions troubled even some readers whom Erasmus

esteemed, who became impatient with exaggerations or equivocations by the clever but (as they thought) disingenuous satirist. This Erasmus, some said, repeating a gibe attributed to the Franciscans of Cologne, laid the egg that Luther hatched.⁵³

From the early 1520s, popes, prelates, kings, and statesmen informed Erasmus that he had a duty to write against Luther. Some even spoke of rumours that he was too friendly with Lutherans and too tolerant of Luther. Erasmus stood his ground at first, insisting that Luther was not wholly wrong.⁵⁴ Scholastic theology, human ordinances, the 'tyranny' of mendicant friars, and the scandal of indulgences, Erasmus told Albert of Brandenburg, cardinal-archbishop of Mainz, were the principal causes of troubles in the church.⁵⁵ The mendicants added to its woes by their hatred of *bonae litterae* and their obstinate stupidity.⁵⁶ In 1523 at the latest he realized that he would become involved in the controversy. He dreaded the shadow of schism in the church, but by 1524, the year in which 'An Examination concerning the Faith' appeared, this seemed inevitable.⁵⁷

The careful reader of Erasmus' doctrinal, exegetical, and controversial writings learns that 'the church' is the weightiest and most powerful term. 'Roman' and 'Catholic' are likewise powerful, yet 'Roman' occurs only once in 'An Examination concerning the Faith,' to identify the origin of a creed, and 'Catholic' does not occur at all. Erasmus is sometimes termed, with good reason, 'a Catholic *sui generis*.' He did not believe that the papal office (unlike the office of bishops) was of divine institution, though he held that it was essential to the unity of the church. He was sceptical too of the authority of general councils. He steadily promoted the baptismal mission of the laity, and declined to attribute to what he often calls 'human ordinances' – such as devotional practices but including pronouncements by councils or bishops – anything more than human authority. For him the Apostles' Creed was dogma; interpretations by doctors or exegetes, however learned, were not binding. We are saved by faith and good moral behaviour, not by philosophical or theological arguments.

Such opinions were not likely to please the doctors and exegetes. Academic theologians, particularly in Paris and Louvain, were initially suspicious, and some of them persistently hostile, to Erasmus' edition and translation of the Greek New Testament and to his annotations; they were hostile to his Paraphrases also, and to much else. That some of them detested the *Colloquies* on both moral and religious grounds and that these were officially censured by the faculty of theology at Paris is no surprise.⁵⁸ Lists of printed books alleged to contain heretical, anticlerical, and obscene sentiments were issued by governments and ecclesiastical bodies throughout the sixteenth century. It should be noticed also that the *Consilium de emendanda*

ecclesia, prepared by a committee of reforming curialists appointed by Pope Paul III in 1535 and presented to him in 1537, was a denunciation of previous abuses by popes and cardinals and an urgent call for reform.⁵⁹ Yet among its recommendations was one to forbid the use in schools of Erasmus' *Colloquies*, 'in which are many things that lead youthful minds to impiety.'⁶⁰

As the religious conflict intensified, Catholic religious authorities increasingly viewed some (but not all) of Erasmus' books as heretical, and attempted to prevent Catholics from printing or reading them. The *Colloquies* especially came under attack. The faculty of theology of the University of Paris banned the *Colloquies* in lists promulgated in 1544, 1547, 1551, and 1556. The initial papal Indexes of Prohibited Books of 1554/55 and 1559 also banned the *Colloquies*. Even though these two Indexes were quickly withdrawn for revision in the face of strong opposition, they indicated the direction of official thinking. The Index of 1564 authorized by the Council of Trent and issued by Pope Pius IV banned the *Colloquies*, while permitting some other works of Erasmus to be used in expurgated form. This Index was accepted through most of the Catholic world, and it established a policy for the *Colloquies*. Indeed, the expanded Index of 1596 issued by Pope Clement VIII reaffirmed the condemnation of the *Colloquies*. When some governments, such as Spain, insisted on issuing their own Indexes, they closely followed the lead of the Tridentine Index by banning the *Colloquies*. Although Indexes of Prohibited Books seldom presented reasons for condemnations of individual titles, it is likely that the numerous strong attacks against churchmen generally and criticism of some Catholic practices and beliefs in the *Colloquies* led to condemnation.⁶¹

A minor consequence of the Council of Trent was the publication of an expurgated text of the *Colloquies* introduced and edited by Nicolas Mercier (Paris: Thiboust 1656; repr 1673/4). Mercier was assistant principal of the Collège de Navarre. He did his work thoroughly.⁶² The major consequence of the papal Index with respect to Erasmus was that the *Colloquies* remained on it, and therefore prohibited, until the end of the nineteenth century. In the years of the Council of Trent (1545–63) Erasmus' reputation reached its nadir. Some of that council's disciplinary reforms of clergy and religious orders were of a kind advocated by Erasmus himself, but he received no acknowledgment at Trent.

VI

The title-page of the March 1522 edition asserts that the *Colloquies* are useful not only for improving grammar-school boys' skills in languages but because they prepare students for life (*ad vitam instituendam*), a phrase kept on the

title-page until the February 1526 edition. Erasmus intended this claim to be taken seriously, although not all the colloquies were written for boys, a fact that becomes clear to us as we go through the book. Erasmus himself tells us, for instance, that 'An Examination concerning the Faith' is not for boys. Women as well as men read the *Colloquies*; they were probably better critics of some than men were.⁶³

Erasmus consistently defended the *Colloquies*. In April 1526, only a few months earlier than the first letter from Juan Maldonado cited above, Erasmus himself had dealt at length with criticism of the *Colloquies* in a carefully drafted letter to Cardinal Wolsey. Those monks and theologians who stupidly and ignorantly denounce him – for he hears that certain persons in Paris have tried to have distribution of the *Colloquies* forbidden – are merely enemies of the study of languages and good letters; they have somehow convinced themselves that Erasmus is infected with Lutheranism. 'In my *Colloquies* there is nothing obscene, irreverent, or seditious. They have much that youth ought to know, to warn them against adopting a mode of life they cannot understand, lest [later in life] they run off to Compostella, deserting a wife and children left at home.'⁶⁴ The pope has invited him to Italy; the king of France and Ferdinand, archduke of Austria and king of Hungary, have also invited him to visit. All this opposition to the *Colloquies* is invidious nonsense, he implies.

A few days after sending this note to Wolsey, Erasmus wrote to John Longland, bishop of Lincoln. The letter includes a defence of the *Colloquies* that deserves quotation:

I am very grateful for your Reverence's pointed reminder about the *Colloquies*. People react differently to it. Some of my English friends, learned and sensible men, were delighted with the work; they think it helpful both for improving Latinity and for exposing popular prejudices. On the other hand, there are some who are not amused – people with no sense of humour. If your Grace will take the time to go through the book you will find that besides instruction it has much else pertinent to the sound training of youth. Entertainment is thrown in as a bait, to entice an age sooner captivated by what is agreeable than by what is good for it. There is nothing obscene in the book, nothing irreverent, nothing to disturb the peace. 'But,' they say, 'joking is not suitable to age.' On the contrary, it is a highly proper thing for elderly men to babble with youngsters as a means of attracting them to learning their letters.⁶⁵

Erasmus made explicit claims for the *Colloquies* many times in his letters and repeated them confidently in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*,' which is dated 21 May 1526 and was printed for the first time in the Froben edition of

June of that year. Erasmus' statement in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' is unequivocal:

This little book, if taught to ingenuous youth, will lead them to many more useful studies: to rhetoric, physics, ethics, and finally to matters of Christian piety . . . In the *Colloquies*, what is said on Creed, mass, fasts, vows, confession has no theological difficulty but is the sort of thing no one should be ignorant of. And if Paul's Epistles are taught to boys, what is so bad about their getting a taste of theological controversy? Besides, since my critics are not unaware that boys who are novices at sophistry are, from the start, given extremely puzzling questions – not to say hair-splitting questions – concerning the divine Persons, why are they unwilling for boys to learn what concerns common life? If they think it makes no difference which character says what, they realize, I suppose, how many passages are met in the Gospels and apostolic writings that – according to *this* rule – contain obvious blasphemy.⁶⁶

He expressed a similar judgment when he replied to Tunstall's criticisms in 1530:

As for the *Colloquies* . . . those people who say I make fun of Christian fasts, of solemn vows, ecclesiastical ceremonies, abstinence from foods as prescribed by the church, invoking of saints, and pilgrimages undertaken for the sake of religion – to sum it up, they're simply liars. Superstition of some people in these matters I do mock; it richly deserves mockery.⁶⁷

He blames the religious orders for the complaints made by Tunstall.

Erasmus occasionally refers to the *Colloquies* as sportive exercises, recreations – perhaps in an effort to play down a book that had cost him so much disfavour. Such a description is not untrue, but it is far from the whole truth. The *Praise of Folly* and the *Colloquies*, once among the works of Erasmus most disliked⁶⁸ and now read more than any others, are no less serious for being at the same time entertaining, witty, and often satirical when their author wanted to expose corruption and denounce moral vice, culpable ignorance, or hypocrisy. Those who say the *Colloquies* contain anything heretical or irreverent are lying, he says in a letter dated May 1536, and he recommends that they take the trouble to read his *Declarationes ad censuras Colloquiorum Lutetiae vulgatas* (that is, the Paris censures and his rebuttals).⁶⁹ These are his last printed comments on the *Colloquies*.

When the time came for Erasmus to draw up a catalogue of his own works,⁷⁰ he positioned the *Colloquies* in the first division among 'everything that concerns literature and education.'⁷¹ That he did so reveals how far

their origins prevailed in his own conception of them, but he might equally have placed them in the fourth division along with the *Praise of Folly* among 'works which contribute to the building of character.' He explained that, surprising as it might seem, the *Moriae encomium* should be put there as it was 'a small book full of humour, but it teaches serious lessons.'⁷² Erasmus had said exactly the same thing of the *Colloquies*, about which he had recently written that, in addition to improving the language skills of boys, 'they prepare students for life.'⁷³ In the *Colloquies* Erasmus had perceived a literary medium destined for the widest possible public, young and old alike, through which he could disseminate his views on manners and morals, on follies and fashions, on matters as whimsical as inns and as serious as the Apostles' Creed.

It was precisely the importance of the *Colloquies* in 'preparing students for life' that insured for this notorious and irresistible book⁷⁴ its immortality and (among some in his own day who found it too frank, too unfairly iconoclastic) its infamy. The pages of the *Colloquies* teem with life, the life of Erasmus' Europe, to be sure, but at another level, recognizably the life of everyman and everywoman throughout the ages. They echo the vigorous, roguish burlesques of his medieval predecessors even as they inculcate the cultivated discipline of the new, urbane Latinity. But above all, and especially in the longer pieces, they reflect and instil the civil religion of the *Enchiridion*. If the *Moriae encomium* was meant to teach that religion, as Erasmus insisted, then most certainly the *Colloquies* did so too. And in all of that, they form an epitome of 'the collected works of Erasmus.'

CRT

NOTES

- 1 See the bibliographies compiled by Professor J.-C. Margolin, who has also written numerous articles and monographs on Erasmus. Three substantial works on Erasmus' *Colloquies*, two of them not yet printed when ASD 1-3 and CWE 23-4 were issued, are Elsbeth Gutmann *Die Colloquia Familiaria des Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Basel and Stuttgart 1968), Bierlaire *Erasme et ses Colloques* (a history of the growth of the *Colloquies* as a book), and the same author's *Les Colloques d'Erasme* (an exposition and assessment of the *Colloquies* as a statement of Erasmus' convictions and programmes for reforms in public and personal life). Scholars of an earlier generation, and their students, were properly grateful for Smith *Key*, a by-product of the author's biography of Erasmus. For both scope and depth, Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* must be included here, even though this book of 1,250 pages in two volumes treats at length not only the *Colloquies* but everything else Erasmus wrote. It is learned, copiously annotated, and acute in its evaluations of Erasmus' work; it is exceptional moreover in comparisons and in references to other writers, classical, medieval,

and modern. Without doubt this is the fullest and most illuminating study of Erasmus as *grammaticus*, *orator*, and *rhetor*.

- 2 Readers of Erasmus today have the best of both worlds, for both a new edition of his *Opera omnia* published in Amsterdam, with Latin text and notes in English, French, or German (1969–) and the Collected Works of Erasmus in English translation (Toronto 1974–) are now coming out.
- 3 Quintilian 1.4.2
- 4 See *De ratione studii* CWE 24 682–91.
- 5 Quintilian 1.8.12
- 6 *De ratione studii* CWE 24 667:1–8
On the education of women see ‘The Abbot and the Learned Lady’ introduction 499–500 and nn32–4.
- 7 Craig R. Thompson *Schools in Tudor England* (Folger Shakespeare Library 1958; repr 1979) 20; see 19–22 in that essay and also the introduction to CWE 23. Joan Simon *Education and Society in Tudor England* (Cambridge 1966) also focuses on England, but much of the material in both publications is applicable to conditions on the continent also. See also ‘The Abbot and the Learned Lady’ n4.
- 8 *De ratione studii* CWE 24 669:1–5
- 9 Beatus Rhenanus tells us that Erasmus knew Terence and Horace by heart (Allen 1 70:540–1). On Terence as the best model of colloquial Latinity see *De copia* 1.59 CWE 24 416:1–2; *De ratione studii* CWE 24 669:9–11. For Cicero see CWE 23 xxxiv–xxxv. For an exhaustive treatment of the day-to-day work of an English grammar school in the sixteenth century, see T.W. Baldwin *William Shakspeare’s Small Latine and Lesse Greeke* 2 vols (Urbana 1944).
- 10 Allen Ep 131:13–14, 20–2 / CWE Ep 131:16–17, 25–7
- 11 See Ep 909. Erasmus’ good friend Beatus Rhenanus at the Froben shop helped Hollonius with preparation of the November 1518 edition of the *Formulae*. He also wrote a preface for it (pages 3–4 in the original edition), addressed to Crato and Nikolaus Stalburg, sons of a wealthy Frankfurt merchant, and at this time students in Louvain. The preface by Beatus Rhenanus also mentions their tutor, Wilhelm Nesen, who became a friend and correspondent of Erasmus. Beatus Rhenanus may have written also the brief salutation by Froben to the reader on the first page of the 1518 edition.
- 12 Allen Ep 3100:6–13, and see lines 29–48 in the same letter.
- 13 See Ep 909. Like most authors, Erasmus was sensitive about printing and publishing: pleased when his books were produced accurately and elegantly, chagrined when they were not. In February 1497 he apologized for imperfections in some verses he had caused to be printed, saying he had been too ill to correct them (Allen Ep 52:19–21 / CWE Ep 52:20–3). Whether he read the proofs of his other publications, and how regularly, we cannot tell, but we know that he read proofs sometimes, and he implies that he had experience in doing so, particularly of texts that demanded special vigilance. To err is human, but he resented the taunt of ‘Errasmus’ used of him by Italian detractors (see, for example Allen Ep 1482:29–59 / CWE Ep 1482:34–61). When excessively busy, or absent from Basel, he must have left proofreading to correctors at the press; the names of many are known (Allen Ep 1482:39n). He could criticize compositors and printers sharply at times. Printers ‘have lost all sense of shame,’ he could say in a moment of exasperation (Allen Ep 1284:19–20 / CWE Ep 1284:20–1).

Speaking in his first will of a projected edition of his collected works, he specifies that correctors at the press be forbidden to make any additions to the text. They are to correct obvious typographical errors, but as concisely as possible. They must be vigilant and diligent in dealing with citations of books, authors, and chapters (Allen VI 504:55–60 Appendix 19). In a prefatory note to readers in February 1536, a few months before his death, he complains of printers who have butchered a text of his or made additions without his permission and of phrases corrupted because the compositors ‘don’t recognize refined discourse’ and therefore make other blunders (Allen Ep 3099).

Reading proofs of one’s own forthcoming book was not uncommon in the sixteenth century, but throughout the history of printing the person expected and available to read and correct proofs was the compositor who had set the type. He made decisions on ‘accidentals’ such as punctuation and spelling. Sometimes, depending on the size of the shop and the amount of work in hand, a ‘corrector’ or ‘reader’ was also available to read proofs, and even the master of the shop took part in this labour.

In August 1535 Erasmus expressed regret to readers of his *Ecclesiastes* for certain errors they would find in the printing of that long treatise, adding that he or his amanuensis was to blame. ‘I was present when the material was being prepared, but because of poor health was unable to make the final revision, particularly at times when I needed sleep or other means of relieving my poor body’ (Allen Ep 3044:4–7). He had to rely on Sigismundus Gelenius, a proofreader for Froben, to mend matters, but further corrections were still needed (Ep 3044).

On proofreading and related topics in early printing and publishing, see Rudolf Hirsch *Printing, Selling, and Reading, 1450–1550* (Wiesbaden 1967) 46–8; Martin Lowry *The World of Aldus Manutius* (Oxford and Ithaca 1979); R.B. McKerrow *An Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford 1928) 205–8; Philip Gaskell *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford 1972) 110–16; Percy Simpson *Proof-Reading in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford 1935; repr 1970); Franz Bierlaire’s article ‘Erasme, les imprimeurs et les Colloques’ *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1978) 106–14, an excellent account of how this one book illustrates the various problems of author and printer. Allen’s introductions and notes to the correspondence of Erasmus include information that is hard to find elsewhere on the printing of books by Erasmus and some of his contemporaries. Allen’s chapter on ‘Erasmus’ Relations with His Printers’ in his *Lectures* 109–37 is also helpful. The richest source of bibliographical information about editions and reprints of the *Colloquies* is BE 2nd series *Colloquia*. It is comprehensive, yet not absolutely definitive, since additions or corrections and the like cannot be complete.

Erasmus wrote fluently. On one occasion he boasted of producing three colloquies in a single day ‘with my left hand’ (*Adversus calumniosissimam epistolam Martini Lutheri* LB x 1555F); he does not say which colloquies these were. He liked to write standing at a writing desk, as we can see in the Louvre portrait by Holbein, the Dürer in the Kupferstichkabinett in Basel, and the Metsys portraits in the Galleria Nazionale in Rome (known as the Barberini portrait) and at Hampton Court (on the latter see Margaret Mann Phillips ‘The Mystery of the Metsys Portrait’ *Erasmus in English* 7 [1975] 18–21). He was conscientious about correcting but hated to revise.

Erasmus had close connections with printing and printers during his lifetime (c 1467–1536). He wrote eloquently of the art and its value to civilization in his pages on Aldo Manuzio and Johann Froben in the *Adagia* of 1508. See *Adagia* II i 1: *Festina lente* LB II 397C–407D and III i 1: *Herculei labores* LB II 707C–717B; translations in Phillips 'Adages' 171–90, 190–209 and CWE 33 3–17, CWE 34 167–82. See also Lisa Jardine *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton 1993).

- 14 ASD I-3 116–17, 118
- 15 For examples see Allen Ep 1340:10n. On book privileges, see Elizabeth Armstrong *Before Copyright: The French Book-privilege System 1498–1526* (Cambridge and New York 1990).
- 16 Dirk Martens published the editions of March 1519 and of October–December 1519. One of the later colloquies, 'Charon,' appeared in print six years (1523) before it was included in a Froben edition of the *Colloquies* (see the introduction to that colloquy).
- 17 LB I 3A–100D / ASD I-6 / CWE 24 280–659; and see CWE 23 xxxii–xlili.
- 18 *De ratione studii epistola protreptica* is not to be confused with the later and longer *De ratione studii* (earliest authorized text Paris: Josse Bade 1512), which is an exposition, with many examples, of the aims of liberal education, of the best authors and texts, and of how to teach language and literature in ways suited to grammar-school pupils (LB I 521A–530B / ASD I-2 111–51 / CWE 24 665–91).
- 19 *De ratione studii epistola protreptica* LB I 447F–448D / ASD I-2 492–6 / CWE 25 192–4 / Ep 56; *Quis sit modus repetendae lectionis* LB I 447F–448E / ASD I-2 496–8 / CWE 25 194–5 / ASD I-3 119–20; on studying alone LB I 448E / ASD I-2 498:16–20 / CWE 25 195 / ASD I-3 120
- 20 Cf *Paraclesis* LB V 140C; *Adagia* I i 74 LB II 389C / CWE 32 268; Allen Ep 1211:312 / CWE Ep 1211:342–3.
- 21 See A. Bömer *Die lateinischen Schülergespräche der Humanisten* 2 vols (Berlin 1897–9; repr Amsterdam 1966) and Allen *Age of Erasmus* 1–65. In *Le livre scolaire au temps d'Erasmus et des humanistes* (Liège 1969), the catalogue of an exhibition of books and manuscripts, René Hoven and Jean Hoyoux describe fifteenth- and sixteenth-century phrase books, grammars, and colloquies, some of them by Erasmus.
- 22 For the Latin text of the *Latinae linguae exercitatio* see Vives *Opera omnia* I 283–408; English translations 1620, 1633 (src 24853, 24854), and Foster Watson's *Tudor School-boy Life: The Dialogues of Juan Luis Vives* (London 1908; repr 1970). Cordier taught grammar in Paris (where Calvin was one of his students) and later in Nevers; still later he moved on to Lausanne and Geneva. He edited some texts of Cicero, wrote *De corrupti sermonis emendatione* (1530) condemning barbarous words, slang, and solecisms whether in French or Latin, correcting the Latin; and a commentary on *Disticha Catonis* (for which see 'Patterns' n2 below). On Cordier see R.R. Bolgar *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge 1954) 352–6.
- 23 For example William Horman, ed M.R. James for the Roxburghe Club (Oxford 1926; facsimile of the London 1519 edition Amsterdam and Norwood, NJ 1975); John Stanbridge and Robert Whittinton, ed Beatrice White, EETS original series 187 (London 1932); and the Magdalen School master ed William Nelson in *A Fifteenth Century School Book* (Oxford 1956). The Stanbridge and Whittinton

vulgaria also have short *formulae*, then larger ones, sentences, and dialogues, but unlike Erasmus' these do not become developed dialogues with plots and characterization.

- 24 These editions are listed at 1137–8.
- 25 They are described in BE 2nd series *Colloquia* 1 226–36.
- 26 See F. Bierlaire 'Erasmus expliqué par Hegendorff' *Quaerendo* 11 no 3 (1972) 200–20. Hegendorff's glosses were independent of the scoliast's.
- 27 BE 2nd series *Colloquia* 1 448. The Latin text is in LB 1 889B–894B. It was reprinted many times in the eighteenth century, once in a French translation (Leiden 1720). The only English version was made by Nathan Bailey and was included in his translation of the complete *Colloquies* (London 1725, 1733; on Bailey and his translation see xxxvi below). The colloquy is sometimes attributed to Cornelis Gerard of Gouda, Erasmus' friend and correspondent. The manuscript is lost, but later evidence seemed to point to Erasmus as author. René Hoven of Liège is now studying such questions and preparing an edition of the *Conflictus*, which will be published by ASD.
- 28 All of these translations were published in November 1506 (Paris: Josse Bade). For a new edition, issued by Bade in 1514, Erasmus contributed Latin versions of seven more works by Lucian. The contents of these two editions were reprinted in 1516, 1517, 1519, 1521, 1528, 1534, 1563, and 1566 in Venice, Basel, Florence, Lyon, and Louvain. On these translations see the introduction to Yale cwm 3 part 1: *Translations of Lucian* ed Craig R. Thompson (New Haven and London 1974).

For Erasmus' translations of Lucian see ASD 1-1 362–627 ed Christopher Robinson. More's are printed in Yale cwm 3 part 1 xvii–156. Erasmus' copy of the 1503 Aldine *Lucian* is in the Provinciale Bibliotheek van Friesland at Leeuwarden. On Erasmus' interest in Lucian see Martha Heep *Die Colloquia familiaria des Erasmus und Lucian* (Halle 1927) and Christopher Robinson *Lucian and His Influence in Europe* (Chapel Hill 1979) 165–97; see also Erika Rummel *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics* (Toronto 1985) chapter 3. Two essays by Sister Geraldine Thompson have much of interest on satire and irony in *Moriae encomium* and especially the *Colloquies*. See her monograph, *Under Pretext of Praise* (Toronto 1973) and 'Bones to the Body: The Scope of *Inventio* in the *Colloquies* of Erasmus' in *Essays on the Works of Erasmus* ed R.L. DeMolen (New Haven 1978) 163–178. The epigraph to the ASD edition of the *Colloquies*, appropriately, is a passage from Erasmus in praise of Lucian (ASD 1-3 3, from Allen Ep 193:43–50). Lucian was often imitated in the sixteenth century. If only because of his contributions to fiction through Erasmus' *Moriae encomium*, Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, and More's *Utopia* (and some of his epigrams), Lucian and Lucianism must be noticed in these pages. In the Enlightenment, his popularity was still steady. Voltaire, an admirer, wrote a short but characteristic dialogue between Lucian and Erasmus, with Rabelais ('last of the French Erasmians,' he has been called) later joining them. Afterwards they encounter Jonathan Swift and all go off to dine together (*Dialogues et anecdotes philosophiques* [1765] ed Raymond Naves [Paris 1940] 146–52). Edward Gibbon had the same idea but never carried it out. It has been adapted by a modern historian, Peter Gay, whose *The Bridge of Criticism* (New York 1970) presents Lucian, Erasmus, and Voltaire discussing the Enlightenment.

- 29 See 592:13–35, 540:34–541:9, and 624:40–628:18.
- 30 WA *Tischreden* 1 no 817
- 31 See 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n7 and 'The Well-to-Do Beggars' n82.
- 32 See 'Youth' n76 and the references given there.
- 33 314:24–315:36
- 34 In 'A Fish Diet' (published February 1526), for instance, we have an imagined conversation between Charles v and Francis I. The French king had been captured in the battle of Pavia (February 1525). He was imprisoned in Spain. By the Treaty of Madrid, January 1526, he was promised release, but did not actually gain his freedom until March of that year. The colloquy, published in February, or rather the passage on 688:33–689:11, must have been written within a few months of publication (see 'A Fish Diet' n89). This fact however does not tell us when other parts of 'A Fish Diet' were composed. Since it is the longest of the colloquies, it may have taken many weeks to write.
- 35 BE 2nd series *Colloquia* records translations and many reprints. For schools, English and Continental, known to have used the *Colloquies* in the sixteenth century, see Bierlaire *Les Colloques d'Erasmus* 123–47.
- 36 H.S. Bennett *English Books and Readers 1558 to 1603* (Cambridge 1965) 266
- 37 Allen Ep 2126:139–45; cf Allen Ep 1875:86n.
- 38 Pl. Lefèvre 'La lecture des oeuvres d'Erasmus au sein du bas clergé durant la première moitié du xvie siècle' in *Scrinium Erasmanum* 1 86–91
- 39 Paul Monroe *Thomas Platter and the Educational Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century* (New York 1904) 64, 69
- 40 See 'The Survival of Erasmus in Italy' and 'The Erasmus Holdings of Roman and Vatican Libraries' in *Erasmus in English* 8 (1976) 2–22 and 13 (1984) 2–29, particularly 11–12. On Italian studies of Erasmus see Olga Z. Pugliese 'A Bibliography of Erasmus Studies in Italian since 1962' *Erasmus in English* 3 (1971) 30–1. Earlier records of translations into Italian are found in BE 2nd series *Colloquia* III *passim*.
- 41 See Paul F. Grendler's review article 'Adages in Italian' *Erasmus in English* 12 (1983) 21 and Silvana Seidel Menchi *Erasmus in Italia* (Turin 1987). Menchi has studied Erasmus' influence on Italian Protestants and those with Protestant leanings in detail. A comprehensive study of Erasmus' influence on orthodox Catholic Italians has yet to be written and would be very useful.
- 42 See Gilbert Degroote *Colloquio Waardering* (1950).
- 43 See *Erasmus et l'Espagne* (Paris 1937); Spanish version, *Erasmus y España* (Mexico City and Buenos Aires 1950; 2nd ed 1966, with appendix on 'Erasmus y el nuevo mundo'); new edition, which includes a reprint of the 1937 French edition, updated material in the two Spanish editions with later updates by Bataillon, and a collection of Bataillon's articles, ed Daniel Devote and Charles Amiel, 3 vols (Geneva 1991). This work is the *magnum opus* by a scholar who wrote many other valuable studies involving Erasmus and the literature of his era.
- 44 Bataillon *Erasmus y España* (1966) 80, 811; see the whole appendix on Erasmus and the New World 807–31.
- 45 Devereux is the necessary guide to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century translations of colloquies into English. Facsimile texts of translations made in the sixteenth century between 1530 and 1568 are in Spurgeon.
- 46 Five of these are in de Vocht *Earliest English Translations*.

- 47 See Bataillon *Erasmus y España* (1966) 286–309 and bibliography nos 471–83. There are a few discrepancies between Bataillon's discussion and Allen's introduction to Ep 1873 concerning attributions of Spanish versions to translators, but both credit Alonso Ruiz de Virués with eight of the dozen known translations of the *Colloquies* into Spanish between 1527 and 1532.
- 48 Allen Ep 1908:36–7
- 49 Allen Ep 1704:35–8
- 50 Some attacks could be ignored, but the major ones had to be contested. Erasmus' defences and counterattacks fill volume IX and most of X in LB and much of his correspondence. The controversial writings have dreary patches, but biographers of Erasmus and chroniclers of the church of the sixteenth century cannot afford to neglect them. The reader of the *Colloquies* will meet many references to them in the notes to this book.
Some of the texts and documents of the controversies are not readily available in English, but consult Erika Rummel *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics* 2 vols (Nieuwkoop 1990).
- 51 See CWE Ep 1254 n6 and Ep 1296:22–4 and n10.
- 52 Allen Ep 2226:56–62
- 53 Allen Ep 1528:11–12 / CWE Ep 1528:15–17
- 54 See Allen Ep 1369:15–21 / CWE Ep 1369:17–23. Allen dates this letter June 1523. Parts of it, however, were probably added later; see the headnote in CWE.
- 55 Allen Ep 1033:119–38 / CWE Ep 1033:131–50; a famous letter dated October 1519. This archbishop had promoted the notorious indulgence-selling campaign of 1517 to raise money with which to repay the papacy for his appointment to the see.
- 56 Allen Ep 1141:25–6 / CWE Ep 1141:30–2, September 1520
- 57 On the progress of this realization see the introduction to 'Faith.'
- 58 For the denunciations of certain passages by the theological faculty of Paris see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 928D–954E.
- 59 The committee included Cardinal Gasparo Contarini, Gianpietro Carafa, Reginald Pole, and Jacopo Sadoletto. The three latter were made cardinals in December 1536.
- 60 Kidd *Documents* 315 no 126 (14)
- 61 The history of the condemnation of the *Colloquies* and other works of Erasmus can best be followed in the various volumes of *Index des livres interdits* ed J.M. de Bujanda et al (Sherbrooke, Québec and Geneva, 1985–). Seven volumes have been published to date.
- 62 For examples see BE 2nd series *Colloquia* 1 390–404.
- 63 See Erasmus' comment in *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 944A and that of Juan Maldonado in Allen Ep 1742:176–8 cited xxxvi above.
- 64 Allen Ep 1697:62–7; a similar statement on the misguided motives of many who undertake pilgrimages – a favourite theme – is prominent in the first part of 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1098:25–1100:9.
- 65 Allen Ep 1704:23–35
- 66 See 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1106:8–10, 27–37.
- 67 Allen Ep 2263:97–102
- 68 Erasmus told his friend Maarten Lips that the three works of his most disliked were *De esu carniū*, *Moriae encomium*, and *Colloquia* (Allen Ep 2566:83–4, November 1531).

- 69 Allen Ep 3122:19–21
- 70 In a letter to Johann von Botzheim dated 30 January 1523; Allen I 38:12–42:10 / CWE 24 694–7 / CWE Ep 1341A:1500–1639 (in its chronological position among the letters)
- 71 Allen I 38:19–20 / CWE Ep 1341A:1507–8
- 72 Allen I 39:33, 40:9–10 / CWE Ep 1341A:1552–3, 1560
- 73 Title-page of the edition of March 1522; see xxxix above.
- 74 James K. McConica 'The Fate of Erasmian Humanism' in *Universities, Societies, and the Future* ed Nicholas Phillipson (Edinburgh 1983) 38

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FAMILIAR COLLOQUIES

Familiaria colloquia

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JOHANNES ERASMIUS FROBEN, GREETING¹

I should count you an uncommonly lucky young man, my beloved Erasmus, to be born in such a flourishing home of the best authors as your father's printing-house and brought up among so many men distinguished for their knowledge of the three ancient tongues; but at your age congratulations are not so much to the point as best wishes. And certainly you bear no ordinary load, if you are to satisfy your most affectionate father, to whom you truly are beloved, which your name means in the Greek, and who rests all his hopes on you, as well as Beatus Rhenanus² and myself, who took the promise at your christening, and Wolfgang Capito,³ who stood sponsor at your confirmation. We have seen to it that your first childish prattle should be shaped by Greek and Latin. This book will help you not a little to acquire the rudiments of religion also, and on this score the uncounted host of children of your age will owe you a debt, as being the channel through which they get this great advantage. For I have taken it into my head to become a child again for some days for your benefit, as I schooled my pen and my matter to suit your tender years. May Jesus keep you always as you go from strength to strength. Farewell.

Basel, 22 February 1522

NOTES

- 1 Ep 1262 is the preface to the March 1522 edition of the *Colloquies*; the translation printed here is that of R.A.B. Mynors in cwe 9. On editions of the *Colloquies*, see the introduction to these volumes xx–xxvi.
- 2 On Beatus Rhenanus see 'Patterns' n14 and 'Things and Names' n1; on Beatus and the *Colloquies*, see the introduction to these volumes n11.
- 3 On Wolfgang Capito see 'A Fish Diet' n188.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO A BOY FULL OF PROMISE, JOHANNES ERASMIUS FROBEN, GREETING¹

The book dedicated to you, sweetest Erasmius, has surpassed my expectations; it will be your task to see that you do not fall short of what I expect of you. The book is so popular and is in such demand and is so dog-eared by the fingering of the young who wish to learn that your father has had to reprint it several times and I have had to enrich it from time to time with fresh additions; you could call it too a kind of Erasmius,² and the darling of all who worship at the Muses' shrine. So you will have to try all the harder to live up to your name, and this involves being very dear to all good people as an educated, honourable man. It will be a great disgrace if, when this book has made so many better Latinists and better men, you behave in such a way as to lose the benefits which for your sake have been open to all men; and while there are so many young people who are grateful to you on account of the *Colloquies*, would it not rightly be thought absurd if it should prove to be your own doing that you cannot thank me for the same thing?

The book has grown into a proper large volume; and you too must try, as you grow in years, to grow likewise in sound learning and uprightness of character. Something special is expected of you, and these expectations it is essential to live up to and will be most creditable to surpass, while in any case you cannot fall short of them without great disgrace. Nor do I say this because I am dissatisfied with your progress hitherto, but to spur a running horse³ and make you run all the more eagerly, especially now you have entered on the time of life when it is most profitable to absorb the elements of learning and religion. See to it then that these *Colloquies* can truly be called your book; and may the Lord Jesus preserve your boyhood free from all stain, and lead you on from strength to strength.

Farewell, from Basel, 1 August 1524.

NOTES

1 Ep 1476 is the preface to the August–September 1524 edition of the *Colloquies*; the translation printed here is that of R.A.B. Mynors and Alexander Dalzell in CWE 10. Johannes Erasmius Froben was now about eight years old; on him see 'Sport' n37.

2 I.e., something lovable

3 *Adagia* I ii 47

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PATTERNS OF INFORMAL CONVERSATION

Familiarium colloquiorum formulae

The *Colloquies* as the book we know – mainly a literary work in form and substance, not merely a popular guide to gaining competence in using Latin – took definitive form in the two editions of March and July–August 1522. Instead of a collection of *formulae* and conversational passages it was to be henceforth a book of dialogues in which conversational *copia* could be acquired, many of them of lasting artistic worth and historical interest; a book for mature readers rather than for schoolboys. Yet its original pedagogic purpose was never forgotten; it was simply less prominent as the volume grew larger. Some of the material in the pre-1522 editions was kept and other parts were omitted or changed as the contents were steadily expanded in successive editions from March 1522 until the final one published in Erasmus' lifetime, the March 1533 edition. For most modern readers the primitive text in the original, unauthorized edition (November 1518) probably has little interest, though it is significant for investigators concerned with the evolution of the *Colloquies*.

The November 1518 text consisted of 'Patterns of Informal Conversation,' together with intermittent dialogue which later, from 1524 on, had a separate running title, 'The Profane Feast' (pages 3–63 in the 1518 book; ASD I-3 29–61). Also in the 1518 volume are 'A Short Rule for Copiousness' (64–74; ASD I-3 62–7) and *De ratione studii ad amicum quendam epistola protreptica* (75–9; ASD I-3 68–70 / Ep 56 / *De conscribendis epistolis* CWE 25 192–4).

Material at 6:1–11:27 of the present volume, beginning 'On First Meeting' and ending with 'unharmd and flourishing,' is a nearly new or rewritten version of the opening pages of the original 1518 edition. Most of 11:29–26:12 in this translation, beginning 'Form of Inquiry on First Meeting,' appeared first in the March 1522 edition (a3–c2); but a few lines of the material between 22:3 and 23:2 were in the first (1518) edition (10–12 there). The colloquies from 'Rash Vows' through 'Off to School' appeared first in the March 1522 edition. Nearly all of 'Additional *formulae*' is a reworking or expansion of pages 13–29 in the 1518 book, but these pages have no separate title before the March 1524 edition; they are presented simply as a continuation of 'Patterns of Informal Conversation.' What follows here is 'The Profane Feast,' but of this text, 143:16–146:18 ('Ballast your ship . . . absorbing of wine') were added in the March 1522 edition (h5 verso–h6 verso) and enlarged in the July–August 1522 edition (h1 verso–h4 recto). Most of the material from

'Come, my kind guests' on 146:19 to the close of the next colloquy, 'A Short Rule for Copiousness,' was in the original edition. In that edition a few French and German synonyms were included (ASD I-3 56:785-6, 57:812-17, 58:855, 59:876-7), but these were not kept in the editions of 1522 and later. Textual development of 'Patterns of Informal Conversation' and 'The Profane Feast' can be traced in BE 2nd series *Colloquia* I and by the critical apparatus in ASD I-3.

Erasmus had promptly condemned the November 1518 publication. For the March 1519 edition brought out by Dirk Martens he wrote a preface, dated at Louvain 1 January 1519 (Ep 909; reprinted by Froben in his May 1519 edition), expressing vexation with the unauthorized November 1518 book and disclaiming responsibility for its numerous errors. They were corrected, and other changes made, in successive editions. For example, *Quis sit modus repetendae lectionis* on how to review a lesson, and a very brief paragraph on whether private study or study with others is more profitable, were added in Froben's February 1519 edition. These were sequels to the *De ratione studii* printed in the November 1518 volume, though in fact they had been printed first in the *Lucubrationculae* of Gervasius Amoenus (Paris 1514); see 'Off to School' n3 below. They appear in some early editions of the *Colloquies*, including the Froben edition of March 1522, but were later incorporated in *De conscribendis epistolis* as specimens of *epistola monitoria*. Since they did not become a permanent part of the *Colloquies*, they are not translated in this book. The Latin texts can be read in ASD I-3 119-20 or in *De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 447F-448E / ASD I-2 496:5-498:20; they are translated in CWE 25 194-5.

ON FIRST MEETING¹

Not without reason does a certain author advise us to be cordial in greeting.² For a cheerful and pleasant greeting often wins friendship and dispels
 5 unfriendliness; undoubtedly it fosters and increases mutual good will. Some people are such Demeas,³ and so boorish, that they hardly return your salutation. In some this fault is due to their upbringing rather than to their natural disposition.

It is a mark of politeness to greet those we chance to meet, or those who
 10 draw near, or whom we ourselves approach to engage them in conversation; likewise those engaged in some work, or dining, yawning, hiccupping, sneezing, coughing. To greet one who is belching or breaking wind is carrying politeness too far, but to greet one who is urinating or defecating is even worse breeding.⁴

'Greetings, father'; 'Greetings, dear little mother'; 'Greetings, my brother'; 'Greetings, honourable master'; 'Greetings with good measure, my uncle'; 'Greetings, my most charming nephew.'

- Politeness calls for adding the title of kinship or relationship, except
 5 when it has some unfavourable connotation. In that event it is preferable to resort to something less accurate but more acceptable, as when we greet a stepmother as 'mother,'⁵ a stepson as 'son,' a stepfather as 'father,' a brother-in-law as 'brother,' a sister-in-law as 'sister.' The same rule holds with regard to titles of age or office. You will give more satisfaction by
 10 greeting an elderly man as 'father' or 'distinguished gentleman' than by a name designating age, even though⁶ ὁ γέρον [old sir] was once spoken as a mark of respect. 'Hail, governor,' 'Hail, officer,' but not 'Hail, bootmaker' or 'Hail, shoemaker.' 'Greetings, my lad,' 'Greetings, young man.' Old men greet youths they don't know as 'son.' Youths greet them in turn as 'father'
 15 or 'master.'

A More Endearing Greeting Between Lovers

- Greetings, my little Cornelia, my life, my light, my delight, my sweet, my honey-wine, my only passion, my little heart, my hope, my comfort, my
 20 beauty.⁷

For the Sake of Honour or Otherwise

- Greetings, young master. Oh, and greetings to you, too, my good sir. Greetings, most distinguished, most illustrious sir. Greetings over and
 25 over again to you, the glory of letters. Hearty greetings to the best of friends. Greetings, my dear Maecenas.⁸ Greetings, my incomparable patron. Greetings, most esteemed sir. Greetings to the unique⁹ ornament of this age. Greetings to Germany's darling. Greetings to all of you – as many as there are – in one greeting. Greetings to all alike. Greetings to my
 30 choice company.¹⁰ Greetings, my fine fellow. Greetings, you consumer of quarts.

Answer Greetings to you, too, you bottomless pit and devourer of cakes.

Hearty greetings, master of every virtue.

- 35 *Answer* The same to you, model of all honesty.

Greetings, little old woman of fifteen years.

Answer Greetings, lass of eighty years.

Good luck to you with your baldness.

- 40 *Answer* Good luck to you with your mangled nose. As you greet, so shall you be greeted;¹¹ if you say anything nasty, you'll hear worse.¹²

Greetings again and again.

Answer And greetings to you forever.

Hail more than a thousand times.

5 *Answer* Truly I'd rather be hale once for all.

Greetings as much as you like.

Answer And to you as much as you deserve.

10 I bid you farewell.

Answer What if I shouldn't wish to fare well? I'd rather be ill than well with *your* welcome.

Hail to your Holiness, Honour, Highness, Majesty, Beatitude, Sublimity

15 (more commonly accepted than approved by educated men).¹³

In the Third Person

Sapidus greets his Erasmus. Sapidus conveys his heartiest greetings to Beatus.¹⁴

20

Another Form

May you be well, Crito. May it be well with you, excellent sir.

Answer And better with you.

25 'Peace to thee, brother' is a Christian greeting, originating with the Jews¹⁵ yet not to be rejected. Similar to it is 'A good life to you.'

Ave, master.

Answer In truth, I'd rather 'ave than be avid.¹⁶

30

Hail [χαίρε]!

Answer Remember you're in Basel, not Athens.

Then¹⁷ why do you dare speak in the Roman tongue when you're not at Rome?

35

FORMS OF WISHING WELL

To wish well is a kind of greeting too.

40

To a Pregnant Woman

God grant you luck in your bearing. God grant you make your husband the parent of a lovely child.¹⁸ May the Virgin Mother grant you good fortune

in becoming a mother. I pray that this swelling of your womb may subside luckily. Heaven grant that whatever this burden you carry, it may slip out with no more trouble than it slipped in.¹⁹ God give you a good delivery.

5

To Diners

May your feast be fortunate. Good luck to the whole company. I pray for every happiness for every one of you. God prosper your feast.

To One Sneezing²⁰

10 Prosperity and luck! God keep you! Bless you! God save you!

To One Undertaking Something

May it be lucky and fortunate for the commonwealth. May what you begin profit everyone. May what you undertake turn out well. May God prosper
 15 your labours. May heaven favour your efforts. I pray that what you've begun you may, by heaven's blessing, bring to a successful conclusion. May Christ Greatest and Best²¹ prosper what is in hand. May what you've begun turn out well. May what you've undertaken end luckily. You've undertaken a holy thing; I pray it may end fortunately and that the favourable will of heaven
 20 may prosper what is most excellently begun. May Christ favour what's well begun. May what you've undertaken prosper. I pray God Greatest and Best that this scheme be as lucky as it is honest. May the affair begun with good omens²² end with better. I pray you may reach Italy with good omens and return with better. God grant that once this journey is luckily completed,
 25 we may shortly congratulate you upon your fortunate return. May it befall you both to sail and to sail back fortunately. May your journey be happy, your return happier. Would that this departure might succeed for you as you desire. Would that this departure might be as pleasant for you as longing for you meantime will be grievous to us. May you weigh anchor²³ with
 30 good omens. I pray that this journey may succeed as each one desires. I pray that this agreement be for the advantage and good of each. I pray that this marriage may give pleasure to all. Jesus Greatest and Best keep you! May the gracious heavens restore you to us safe and sound. God keep you, the half of my soul.²⁴ I devoutly hope for your safe return. I pray that this year
 35 may commence auspiciously for you, continue more auspiciously, conclude most auspiciously, and return again and again, always luckier.

Answer And I pray in turn that you may have many very lucky times, lest you receive nought but thanks for your good wishes. I pray that this day will have dawned bright for you.

40 I pray that this sun will have risen lucky for you.

Answer The same to you. May the dawn of this day be lucky and exceedingly prosperous for us both. I wish you good night, father. I pray that you may

have a peaceful night. May you sleep well. God grant you quiet rest. May he grant you dreamless sleep. God grant you may either sleep peacefully or dream luckily.

5 May you have a favourable night.

Answer But for my part, I pray that – since you love a profit – you may have a thousand most favourable nights instead of one.

FAREWELL AT PARTING²⁵

10

Goodbye, everybody. Farewell. Take as good care of yourself as possible. Watch your health carefully. I bid you farewell. The time already calls me elsewhere; fare you well. Fare as well as possible. Fare as well as a champion, or, if you prefer, as a good athlete.²⁶ Farewell as you deserve. Farewell as

15 you are worthy. Farewell for these two days. If you are taking leave of me, farewell until tomorrow. You want something? Is there something else you want of me?

Answer Nothing except that you fare well. Try to be well. Take care of your health. Have regard to your welfare. See that at our next meeting we find

20 you plump and happy. I bid you make yourself sleek.²⁷ Take care to have 'a sound mind in a sound body.'²⁸

Try to be entirely well, both in body and in mind.

Answer I'll try. A double farewell to you, too. To you in turn I fervently wish

25 good health.

GREETING THROUGH ANOTHER PERSON²⁹

Give Froben hearty greeting in my name. Also be sure to greet little
30 Erasmus for me. Then say 'Greetings' from me to his mother, Gertrud, as courteously as you can.³⁰ Say I wish all joy to them all. Greet the company earnestly for me. Greet all my friends with my message. Give my greetings to your wife. In your letter to your brother add a greeting from me. Greet my kinsman for me. Have you any requests to send to yours by me?

35 *Answer* That they fare well. Is there any message you would like me to bear to yours?

Answer A hearty greeting to all, but especially to my father. Are there any you wish me to greet in your name?

40 *Answer* All who inquire about me. Return with interest the greeting you've brought from my friends. Greet carefully in turn, with my thanks, all those in whose names you greeted me. In greeting your friends be my proxy, I beg

you. I would have greeted my son-in-law by letter, but you will act for me in place of a letter to him.

Ho there, ho! Where are you hurrying to?

5 *Answer* Straight to Louvain.

Wait a bit, I have a commission for you.

Answer But a parcel isn't convenient for one who travels on foot. What do you want me to do?

Greet Goclenius, Rutgerus, Campensis, and the entire triple-tongued chorus
10 for me.³¹

Answer If you lay on me no other burden than greetings, I'll bear them easily.

But lest you do this without recompense, I pray that safety may accompany you on your way there and back.

15

HOW ONE SHOULD BE GREETED ON HIS RETURN³²

We rejoice in your safe arrival. It's a pleasure to have you here safe and sound. Your return gives us pleasure. We're glad of your lucky return.

20 Thank heaven, you've come back to us unharmed. The more grievous our longing for you, the more joyful is this sight of you again. We congratulate both you and ourselves that you're restored to us hale and hearty. This return of yours is the more joyful to us, the more unexpected it was.

Answer I'm happy in my turn that, safe and sound, I've found you safe
25 and sound. I'm extremely glad to have found you well. I wouldn't consider myself safely back unless I'd found you well. Now at last I seem safe when I see you unharmed and flourishing.

FORM OF INQUIRY ON FIRST MEETING

30 *GEORGE, LIVINUS*³³

George Just what coop or cave do you come to us from?

Livinus Why ask such a question?

George Because you're ill fed. Because you're so thin you're transparent;
35 you creak from dryness. Where've you been?

Livinus The Collège de Montaigu.³⁴

George Then you come to us full of learning.

Livinus Oh, no – full of lice.

George Fine company you bring with you!

40 **Livinus** Yes indeed; it's not safe nowadays to travel without company.

George I know the student set! – Do you bring any news from Paris?

Livinus Mainly this, which I know will seem unbelievable to you: at Paris a beet savours of wisdom and an oak preaches.³⁵

George What's that you say?

Livinus What you hear.

5 **George** What do I hear?

Livinus What I say.³⁶

George It's like a prodigy. Mushrooms³⁷ and stones must needs be the listeners there where such do the preaching.

Livinus But that's the way it is. It's not hearsay I'm relating, either, but what

10 I know for a fact.

George Men there must be very wise, then, if beet and oak are wise.

Livinus A good guess.

Another

15 **George** Are you well?

Livinus Take a good look at my face.

George Why not bid me inspect your urine instead? Do you take me for a doctor? I don't ask how your health is – for your appearance testifies you're in splendid condition – but how your mood is.

20 **Livinus** Physically I'm fine, but I'm in low spirits.

George But one who's troubled in that respect isn't well.

Livinus That's my condition: body strong but purse ill.

George Your mother will easily cure this malady. – You've been well to date?

25 **Livinus** Had my ups and downs. As this world goes.

George Are you in proper health? Affairs in good order? Affairs satisfactory? Always been in good health?

Livinus Very good, thank heaven. I've always had excellent health, by God's grace. Always I've enjoyed good health. Thus far I've been in good
30 health: favourable, undamaged, lucky, thriving, fortunate, undiminished, magnificent, vigorous, first-rate³⁸ health.

George Heaven grant this may be lasting and yours to keep! I'm glad to hear this. Your news brings me great pleasure. This is exceedingly agreeable for me to hear. I rejoice beyond measure to hear this sort of talk from you.

35 Not unwillingly do I hear this. I'm very happy to hear this from you. I hope you may always do the same. I hope you may be well like this as long as possible. I congratulate you; I rejoice for myself. Thank heaven! I thank heaven.

Livinus I'm fine indeed if you're well.

40 **George** You've had no trouble meanwhile?

Livinus Only that I couldn't enjoy your company.

George How is your health?

Livinus Fine, excellent, very good, good, marvellous, capital, couldn't be better, favourable, satisfactory, not bad at all. I'm as well as I could wish, better than I deserve, splendid, in top form,³⁹ robust.

5 **George** I was expecting you to say also you felt bully.⁴⁰

IN POOR HEALTH

George Are you well?

10 **Livinus** Truly I wish I were. Not altogether as I'd like. So-so. Fair. I'm as well as I can be, since I can't be as well as I wish.⁴¹ As usual. As heaven wills. Not first-rate, to be sure. Never been worse. As well as I'm accustomed to being. As well as people who have dealings with doctors usually are.

George How are you?

15 **Livinus** Otherwise than I'd like.

George How's your health?

Livinus Not very favourable, unfavourable, extremely unfavourable, unfortunate, not thriving, not propitious, bad, adverse, unlucky, feeble, uncertain, middling, subnormal, far from what I'd like, passable, such as I
20 might wish to my enemies.

George You tell me bitter news indeed. Heaven forbid! God avert it! Say something pleasant.⁴² I hope you're mistaken about this. You must cheer up. Be brave and unflinching. Courage is a great help in adversity. Your mind must be bolstered by hope of better fortune. What's the illness? What sort of
25 malady is it? What illness has hold of you? What illness are you seized by? What illness have you? What illness has you in its power?

Livinus I don't know; and I'm in the greater danger for that reason.

George True, for diagnosis of the disease is a step towards sound health. Have you consulted no physicians?

30 **Livinus** Oh, yes, a great many.

George What do they say?

Livinus What Demipho's advisers say in the comedy:⁴³ one says no, another yes, another decides he'll have to think it over. They all agree on this, that I'm in a bad way.

35 **George** How long has this illness had hold of you? Have you had this illness for a long time? How long ago was it that you were taken ill?

Livinus Three weeks, more or less. Almost a month. This is already the third month. To me it seems an age since I began to be ill.

George I think an effort should be made to prevent this disease from taking
40 root.

Livinus It's rooted too deeply already.

George Not dropsy, is it?

Livinus They say not.

George Not dysentery?

Livinus I don't believe so.

5 **George** Not a fever?

Livinus A kind of fever, I think, but a new type – as new, hitherto unknown diseases appear frequently nowadays.

George But there were more than enough of the old ones.

Livinus So it has pleased Nature, too much a stepmother.⁴⁴

10 **George** How frequently does the pain recur?

Livinus How frequently? Why, every day, oftener than Euripus.⁴⁵

George Strange! An awful misfortune! Where did you contract the disease? What do you suppose is the source of this illness?

Livinus Fasting.

15 **George** But you're not usually so overscrupulous that you torture yourself with hunger.

Livinus It wasn't a matter of scruple but of poverty.

George What poverty?

20 **Livinus** I got nothing to eat. It came from cold, I believe. I suspect the illness was caused by rotten eggs. From wine diluted too much.⁴⁶ Indigestion, from undigested misfortune.

George See that you don't bring on this malady from immoderate or unseasonable study or hard drinking or too much sexual activity. Why don't you send for a doctor?

25 **Livinus** I'm afraid he might aggravate the disease rather than cure it.⁴⁷ I fear he might administer poison instead of medicine.

George Then you ought to choose one you can trust.

Livinus If I must die I'd rather die once for all than be tortured by so many drugs.

30 **George** Then set about being your own doctor. If you distrust a medical man, I pray God may be a doctor to you instead. Some persons have recovered their health by donning a Dominican or Franciscan cowl.⁴⁸

Livinus Perhaps the same thing would have happened had they put on a pimp's cloak.⁴⁹ But these things won't help one who has no faith in them.

35 **George** Then have faith that you may recover. Others have been cured of illness by making vows to some saint.⁵⁰

Livinus But I make no bargains with saints.

George Then seek the blessing of health from Christ, in whom you do have faith.

40 **Livinus** But I don't know if it is a blessing.

George Not a blessing to be freed from disease?

Livinus Sometimes it's more blessed to die. Of Christ I seek only that he grant me what he knows is best.

George Take something to purge yourself.

Livinus My bowels move readily enough of their own accord.

5 **George** Your bowels need action. Your bowels need movement.

Livinus On the contrary they need stoppage, rather, for they're more than loose enough already.

Another

10 **George** Was your journey pleasant and profitable?

Livinus Good enough, except that nothing's ever safe from robbers.⁵¹

George That's the gamble of war.

Livinus Yes, but a damned bad gamble.

George Did you come on foot or on horseback?

15 **Livinus** Partly on foot, partly by wagon, partly on horseback, partly by ship.

George How's everything in France?

Livinus Quite upset. There are grave threats of war. What harm their enemies may suffer I don't know; certainly the French are already beset by unspeakable calamities.⁵²

20 **George** Whence come these commotions of wars?

Livinus Whence but from the ambition of rulers?⁵³

George But their wisdom should have been able to calm the storms of human affairs.

25 **Livinus** They calm them, all right – as the south wind calms!⁵⁴ They convince themselves that they're gods and that this world was created for their own advantage.

George A prince, rather, is designated for the sake of the state, not the state for the advantage of the prince.⁵⁵

30 **Livinus** What's more, there are even divines⁵⁶ who fan the flames⁵⁷ and sound the trumpet of war.

George Those I'd put in the front line.

Livinus But they're careful to keep out of the danger zone.⁵⁸

George Let's leave this public business to be mended by the Fates. Now,
35 how are your personal affairs?

Livinus Fine, fortunate, so-so, tolerable.

George How does your business get on? Not as you hoped?

Livinus Nay, beyond my wishes, beyond my deserts, beyond my expectation.

40 **George** Everything quite as you wish it? Everything quite safe and prosperous?

Livinus My affairs couldn't be in worse condition. Business couldn't be worse.

George Didn't you get what you were after? The game you were hunting got away?

5 **Livinus** I was hunting, all right, but Delia⁵⁹ did not favour me.

George Is there no hope left?

Livinus Plenty of hope but nothing of substance.

George The bishop held out no hope?

Livinus Wagonloads, shiploads⁶⁰ of hope; but nothing else.

10 **George** He's sent nothing yet?

Livinus He was generous in his promises but hasn't sent a farthing.⁶¹

George Then you must sustain your spirit by hope.

Livinus But my belly can't be fed by hope. Those who are nourished by hope hang in suspense; they don't live.

15 **George** At any rate you were better suited for travelling because your money-belt wasn't heavy.⁶²

Livinus Admitted, and I was safer too, for there's no better protection against robbers. But I'd prefer both the load and the risk.

George You had nothing taken from you on your journey?

20 **Livinus** From me? I ask you, what could you take from a destitute man? The others were in greater danger than I. As a penniless traveller I could sing and be hungry the whole way.⁶³ Anything else?

George Where do you go from here, now?

Livinus Straight home, to my own hearth that I haven't seen for so long.

25 **George** I hope you'll find everything agreeable there.

Livinus Heaven grant it! Anything new at my house?

George Only that you'll find the family increased. For while you were gone your Catulla⁶⁴ produced a young one. Your hen laid you an egg.⁶⁵

Livinus Good news! Fine news! I promise you a gospel for this news.

30 **George** What – the gospel according to Matthew?

Livinus No, according to Homer. Here, take it.

George Keep your gospel; I've enough stones at home.

Livinus Don't scorn this little gift. It's eagle-stone, which, when brought near women in labour, speeds their delivery.⁶⁶

35 **George** Really? Thanks very much. I'll look for a way to repay you for this present.

Livinus Consider me generously paid by your good will.

George In truth nothing more apropos could have happened, because my wife has been pregnant a long time.

40 **Livinus** Then I'll stipulate that if she has a boy, you make me godfather.

George I promise; and the boy will be named after you.

Livinus May it bring good luck to us both!

George To us all, rather.

5

[*Another*]

MAURICE,⁶⁷ CYPRIAN

Maurice You've returned to us fatter than usual. You've come back taller.

Cyprian But I'd rather return wiser or more learned.

10 **Maurice** You went away beardless; you've returned with a bit of beard.⁶⁸
You've aged somewhat during your absence. What's the meaning of this
paleness? This skinniness? This wrinkled brow?

Cyprian One's looks answer to one's luck.

Maurice Had bad luck?

15 **Cyprian** Fortune's never favoured me at any time, but never has she treated
me worse than now.

Maurice Too bad; I'm very sorry about your misfortune. But what's the
trouble?

Cyprian I made shipwreck of all my money.

20 **Maurice** In the sea?

Cyprian No, on shore, before I went aboard ship.

Maurice Where?

Cyprian On the coast of Britain.

Maurice Lucky you swam to safety. Better to lose money than life. Money is
25 easier to part with than reputation.

Cyprian My life and reputation are unharmed; my money is gone.

Maurice Life can't be recovered by any means, reputation hardly; money
can easily be made up from somewhere. How did this disaster happen?

Cyprian I don't know, unless it was just my fate. Thus it pleased the gods.
30 Thus it pleased my evil genius.⁶⁹

Maurice So you see the safest riches are learning and virtue, which can't be
snatched away and don't burden the bearer.

Cyprian Well, that's brilliant reasoning, but I'm vexed all the same.

35

Another

CLAUDIUS, BALBUS⁷⁰

Claudius Glad to see you back, Balbus.

Balbus And I'm glad to see you still alive, Claudius.

40 **Claudius** Glad you've come home to your own country.

Balbus Congratulate me rather on being a refugee from France.

Claudius Why so?

Balbus Because there everything is upset by war.

Claudius What have the Muses to do with Mars?

5 **Balbus** But not even the Muses are spared there.

Claudius Then you're lucky to have escaped.

Balbus Not without danger, though.

Claudius You've come back to us completely changed.

Balbus How so?

10 **Claudius** From a Hollander you're turned into a Frenchman.⁷¹

Balbus What? Was I a capon when I left here?

Claudius Your dress shows you're changed from a Dutchman to a Frenchman.

15 **Balbus** Better this change than turn into a hen! But as a cowl doesn't make a monk,⁷² neither do clothes make a Frenchman.

Claudius Is your French good now?

Balbus Good enough.

Claudius How did you learn it?

Balbus From teachers who were anything but speechless.

20 **Claudius** Who?

Balbus From *les femmes*,⁷³ who chatter more than turtledoves.⁷⁴

Claudius It's easy to pick up the lingo in such a school.⁷⁵ Do you pronounce French well?

Balbus Oh, yes; Latin too I pronounce in the French manner.

25 **Claudius** Then you'll never write good verses.⁷⁶

Balbus Why?

Claudius Because the quantity of the syllables is lost.

Balbus The quality's enough for me.⁷⁷

Claudius Is Paris free from plague?

30 **Balbus** No, but the plague isn't there all the time. It comes and goes. Sometimes there's a respite; then it returns.

Claudius Wasn't war calamity enough?

Balbus Yes, had not heaven ordained otherwise.

Claudius Food must be dear there.

35 **Balbus** It's extremely scarce. Everything's in short supply there except damned villainous soldiers. Good men aren't worth a rap there.

Claudius Why do the French war with the eagle?

Balbus They take after the beetle, which is always at war with the eagle.⁷⁸ In war everyone thinks himself a Hercules.

40 **Claudius** I won't hold you up any longer. We'll banter further at some other time convenient to us both. Just now a little business calls me elsewhere.

DOMESTIC CONVERSATION

PETER, MIDA (a servant-boy), JODOCUS

Peter Hey there, boy! Nobody coming?⁷⁹

5 **Mida** He'll break the door open, I'm sure. Must be well known here. So it's you, my fine friend.⁸⁰ What do you bring, Peter?

Peter Myself.

Mida You've brought something pretty worthless.

Peter Yet I cost my father a great deal.

10 **Mida** I'm sure you did – much more than you could be resold for.

Peter But is Jodocus at home?

Mida Don't know but I'll find out.

Peter No, go and ask him if he pleases to be at home now.

Mida You go, rather, and be your own Mercury.⁸¹

15

Peter Hello there, Jodocus! Are you at home?

Jodocus No, I'm not.

Peter You have nerve! Don't I hear you speaking?

Jodocus You have more nerve. I believed your maid recently when she told
20 me *you* weren't at home, and yet you don't believe me?⁸²

Peter You're right. Tit for tat.⁸³

Jodocus I'm not at home to everyone, just as I don't sleep for everyone.⁸⁴ Hereafter I'll always be at home to you.

Peter But you seem to me to live a snail's life.⁸⁵

25 **Jodocus** How so?

Peter Because you always hide at home and never come out. You're no different from a crippled cobbler,⁸⁶ forever sitting at home. You'll grow musty at home.

Jodocus I'm busy at home; I've no business out of doors. Even if I had, this
30 weather would have kept me out of sight for some days.

Peter But now it's bright and clear, just right for strolling. See how inviting it is.

Jodocus If you'd like to take a walk, I won't refuse.

Peter Certainly we should take advantage of this weather.

35 **Jodocus** We ought to get one or two friends to go along with us.

Peter We will. Only say who.

Jodocus What about Hugo?

Peter Hugo? Almost a *nugo* [fool].⁸⁷

Jodocus Good, I like that pun.

40 **Peter** What about Alaard?⁸⁸

Jodocus A chatterbox. A bit deaf but by no means dumb.

Peter We'll add Nevius⁸⁹ if that suits you.

Jodocus With him spinning them, we'll never run short of yarns. The storytellers are satisfactory. It remains for you to look out for a pleasant place.

5 **Peter** I'll show you a place where you'll lack neither shade of grove nor verdure of green fields nor bubbling fountains. You'll say it's a fit habitation for the Muses.⁹⁰

Jodocus You make splendid promises.

Peter You're always at your books. You'll wear yourself out with excessive
10 study.

Jodocus I'd rather be worn out with study than with love.

Peter But we don't live to study; we study in order to live agreeably.

Jodocus To me it's delightful to spend my life with books.

Peter I approve of lingering over books but not of malingering over them. –
15 Have you enjoyed this walk?

Jodocus It's pleased me very much.

Another

GILES, LEONARD⁹¹

20

Giles Where's our Leonard going?

Leonard I was on my way to you.

Giles Unusual thing for you to do.

Leonard Why?

25 **Giles** Because it's been a year now since you visited us.

Leonard I'd rather offend by being missed than by being a nuisance.

Giles On the contrary, I never tire of a good friend. Indeed the oftener you come the better you'll please me.

Leonard What's been happening at your house?

30 **Giles** A good deal that I don't like.

Leonard I'm not surprised. Has your wife had her baby yet?

Giles Long ago – twins at that.

Leonard You don't say so!

Giles Yes, and she's already pregnant again.

35 **Leonard** That's how families grow.

Giles But I wish Fortune would multiply my money as much as my wife does my family.

Leonard Have you settled your daughter yet?

Giles Not yet.

40 **Leonard** Take care lest it be unsafe to keep a grown girl like that at home. You ought to look for a son-in-law.

Giles No need to. She has many suitors already.

Leonard Then what remains but to choose from the lot the one most acceptable to you?

5 **Giles** They're all such that I don't know which I'd pick for her, but my daughter shrinks from marriage.

Leonard What's that? But unless I'm mistaken, she's been of marriageable age this long while.⁹² She's been suited for a man, ready for a husband, for a long time. For some time she's been ripe for a husband.

10 **Giles** Yes, of course. She's already past seventeen. In her nineteenth year. She's eighteen years old.

Leonard Then why is she averse to marriage?

Giles Wants to be the bride of Christ, she says.

Leonard He has many brides, to be sure. But is a woman who lives chastely with a husband married to an evil spirit?

15 **Giles** I don't think so.

Leonard What divinity put this notion into your daughter's head?

Giles I don't know, but its impossible to dissuade her by any arguments.

Leonard See that magicians don't charm her.

20 **Giles** I know those kidnappers. I defend my house carefully against that sort of creature.

Leonard What do you mean to do, then? Let the girl have her way?

Giles I'm going to block it if I can. I'll try everything to change her mind. But if she holds out I won't oppose her decision, lest I should seem to oppose God⁹³ – or rather the monks.⁹⁴

25 **Leonard** Reverently spoken. But do test the girl's constancy all you can, so she won't regret her action after it's too late to change.

Giles I'll do my best.

Leonard What are your sons doing?

30 **Giles** The eldest is already married and will soon be a father; the youngest I've sent off to Paris, because here he was just a playboy.

Leonard Why send him there?

Giles So he'd come back a master⁹⁵ – a bigger fool than he went.

Leonard Come, come, that's no way to talk.

Giles My middle son has just taken holy orders.

35 **Leonard** I pray everything may turn out well.

Another

MOPSUS, DROMO⁹⁶

40 **Mopsus** What's going on? What's Dromo doing?

Dromo Sitting still.

Mopsus I see; but how goes everything with you?

Dromo As it does with those whom heaven dislikes.

Mopsus God avert this omen! What are you doing?

Dromo Loafing. What you see: nothing at all.

5 **Mopsus** Loafing's better than doing nothing.⁹⁷ – Perhaps I interrupt when you're busy.

Dromo No, completely idle. I'd just begun to be bored with loafing and wanted some company.

Mopsus Perhaps I'm in your way, I interfere, I disturb your business.

10 **Dromo** No, you dispel my boredom.

Mopsus Please forgive me if I've interfered at a bad time.

Dromo No, you come conveniently. You've arrived opportunely. You come when you're wanted. Your interruption gives me much pleasure.

Mopsus Perhaps you're engaged in something important. I wouldn't want
15 to be in the way.

Dromo No, you're like the wolf in the fable,⁹⁸ for we were just talking about you.

Mopsus I could easily believe that, because on my way here my ear rang wonderfully.

20 **Dromo** Which ear?

Mopsus Left.⁹⁹ So I conjecture nothing very wonderful was said about me.

Dromo Oh, on the contrary, nothing that was not most creditable.

Mopsus Then the fable must have been wrong. But what good was said of me?

25 **Dromo** They say you've become a hunter.

Mopsus Yes, and I've already snared the game I was after.¹⁰⁰

Dromo What game?

Mopsus A charming girl I'm to marry the day after tomorrow; and I beg you to be good enough to grace my wedding with your presence.

30 **Dromo** Who's the bride-to-be?

Mopsus Alice, the daughter of Chremes.

Dromo You're a queer judge of beauty.¹⁰¹ You fancy that black-haired, flat-nosed, big-mouthed, sway-backed girl?

Mopsus Stop! It's me that's marrying her, not you. Isn't it enough that the
35 queen is beautiful to her king?¹⁰² The less you like her, the more I'll like her.

Another

SYRUS, GETA¹⁰³

40 **Syrus** I wish you much happiness.

Geta And I wish you double whatever you wish me.

Syrus What are you doing?

Geta Chatting.

Syrus What? You're chatting alone?

Geta As you see.

5 **Syrus** With yourself, maybe. Then you should make sure you converse with an honest fellow!

Geta Oh, I'm chatting with a most agreeable crony.

Syrus Who?

Geta Apuleius.¹⁰⁴

10 **Syrus** You're always doing that. But 'the Muses love alternate strains.'¹⁰⁵ You're forever studying.

Geta There's no getting your fill of studies.

Syrus True, but still there's a certain moderation. Studies are not to be neglected, certainly, but they should be interrupted sometimes. They're not
15 to be given up but relaxed. Nothing is sweet that lasts forever. 'Temperance enhances pleasures.'¹⁰⁶ You do nothing but study. Always you're studying. You devote yourself to literature without intermission. You're interminably mired in papers. You study day and night. There's never a time when you're not studying.¹⁰⁷ You're zealous in study. You're perpetually intent
20 upon books. You make no end or measure of studying. You mingle no rest with your studies. You never interrupt or cease the labour of studying.

Geta Come, you're up to your old tricks. You're laughing at me as usual. Now you're making fun of me, surely. You're laughing at me facetiously.
25 You're playing the satirist. You turn up your nose at me.¹⁰⁸ Your teasing doesn't fool me. Now you're clearly playing a joke on me. I afford you laughter. I'm laughed at by you. You consider me a source of amusement. Now you make jests and quips at my expense. Sew asses' ears on me while you're at it. These books covered with dust and grime tell you themselves
30 how immoderate I am in study!

Syrus Hope to die if I'm not serious. Damned if I'm making something up. May I not live if I'm pretending. I speak what I feel. I'm telling the facts. I speak seriously. I speak sincerely. I don't feel otherwise than I speak.

35 *Why Don't You Visit?*

Geta Why is it you haven't been to see us for so long? What's the reason you so seldom visit us? How come you haven't come to see us for such a long time? Why are you so rare a greeter? What do you mean by not meeting with us for so long? What's prevented you from visiting us more
40 often? What's been the trouble that you have not given us the chance to see you?

I Was Too Busy

- Syrus** I had no leisure for it. I wanted to, certainly, but business didn't permit. So far, business wouldn't allow me to visit you. The flood of business¹⁰⁹ in which I was involved wouldn't allow me to pay my respects to you. I was too busy to be able to do so. I was distraught by such a variety of troubles that I wasn't free to come to see you. I scarcely had the opportunity, so completely did certain troublesome business occupy me. Blame my business, not me. There was no want of will, but necessity forbade it. To date I've had no free time. So far I haven't found leisure. Thus far there hasn't been time. Health didn't permit. Stormy weather didn't permit.
- Geta** I accept your excuse, of course, but on condition you don't use it too often. Your excuse is better than I could wish, since health was the reason. I'll forgive you on condition that you make up dutifully for lost time – if you compensate for previous delay by frequent visiting.
- Syrus** You should pay no attention to sheer conventionalities of this kind. Our friendship is too firm to require sustaining by these conventional observances. He who loves steadfastly visits often enough.
- Geta** Damn those cares that deprive us of you! What curse shall I call down on those engagements that begrudge us such a friend? Worse luck to that fever which has racked us with so strong a desire for you! A curse on that fever, and may you be safe.

COMMANDING AND PROMISING¹¹⁰

JAMES, SAPIDUS

- James** I beg you to take this matter to heart. Again and again I ask you to make this business your care. In this matter I wish you would show all your sapience.¹¹¹ Do please treat this business carefully. I entreat you to be vigilant in this matter. Take good care of this matter on my account. If you're really the one I've always taken you for, try to show in this matter how much you esteem me.
- Sapidus** Stop: I'll execute this for you, and speedily, too. I can't guarantee the outcome; this I do promise, that I'll lack neither fidelity nor zeal. I'll look after it more diligently than if it were my own business, though I consider a friend's concern my own.¹¹² Rely on it that I'll so act that you shall find me wanting in anything rather than trustworthiness and diligence. Sleep sound on either ear;¹¹³ I'll see that this is done. Set your mind at rest; I take the whole business upon me. I rejoice in the opportunity afforded me of proving my regard for you. I promise nothing in words, to be sure, but in actions I'll perform whatever is the part of a sincere and deeply devoted friend. I wouldn't want to flatter you with vain hope. I'll make sure that you can say this business was committed to a friend.

SUCCESS¹¹⁴

- Sapidus** The affair has succeeded better than I thought it would. Fortune has favoured the prayers of us both. Fortune couldn't have been more compliant if she had married you.¹¹⁵ Your affair has advanced with favourable winds and current.¹¹⁶ The glow of benevolent fortune has exceeded even our wishes. It's my opinion you've appeased the Rhamnusia goddess,¹¹⁷ so luckily do all your wishes turn out. I've gained more than I'd dared hope for. This voyage has been completed with favourable winds the whole way.
- 10 The entire affair has turned out according to our hopes.¹¹⁸ This gamble¹¹⁹ has turned out beautifully for us. I imagine the night owl has flown,¹²⁰ so luckily did this undertaking, which began inauspiciously, turn out for us.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS¹²¹

- 15 **James** I'm grateful indeed and shall be as long as I live. For this your service to me I could scarcely give adequate thanks; I could by no means repay it. I see how much I'm indebted to your solicitude for me. I'm not surprised, for it's nothing new you've done, and I'm the more obliged on that account.
- 20 For this service of yours to me I love you very much, my Sapidus, as it is right I should. You have, and always shall have, my thanks for having shown yourself to be anything but a courtierlike¹²² friend in this matter. For having my business close to your heart I love you and thank you. For this service you've gained my heartiest thanks. It is cause for gratitude that you've
- 25 handled my business in good faith. Of all the many services you've done for me, this is far and away the most gratifying. I can't by any means return you equal thanks. It would be idle to quibble; the one thing I can do I'll do as long as I live. I confess I'm completely overcome by your kindness to me. I owe you more on this account than I could ever repay. By this kindness
- 30 you've bound me to you too tightly for me to loosen the bond. You've put me under an obligation too great to allow me ever to blot my name from your daybook.¹²³ By this service you've made me yours in such fashion that no slave is equally bound to his master's business. By this affair you've laid me under obligation too binding for me ever to repay the debt. I'm indebted
- 35 to you on many accounts, but on none more than this. Thanks should be expressed for ordinary kindnesses; this one is too great for suitable thanks in words.

Answer

- 40 **Sapidus** Away with this! Our bond is too great for you to owe thanks to me, or for me to owe thanks to you, for any service. I didn't confer this kindness on you but returned it. I think I'm abundantly repaid if what I did

- gladly is acceptable. There's no reason for you to thank me if by this slight service I paid you back for so many exceptional favours you've done me. Indeed I deserve no praise; I ought to be regarded as most ungrateful had I failed such a friend. Whatever my means, whatever can be accomplished
- 5 by my efforts, deem it as much yours as your most personal possession. I consider that I was done a kindness by your thinking well of my service. You thank me so elaborately for a slight service – as if I weren't in your debt for much greater ones! He who does a good turn for a friend does himself a favour. He who deserves well of a friend does not confer a favour
- 10 but lends at interest. If you approve wholeheartedly of my service for you, see that you employ me oftener. I'll believe what I did is pleasing to you only if, whenever you need my help, you won't ask but command what you please.

NOTES

- 1 Proper modes of greeting and address were standard topics in works on epistolography and in the many manuals of courtesy published in Erasmus' time. Among the latter his *De civilitate* (Basel 1530) was a favourite (LB I 1033A–1044B / CWE 25 269–89). See also 'Manners.' *De conscribendis epistolis* (Cambridge 1521; first authorized edition Basel 1522) has chapters on salutations and farewells in letters (LB I 367D–375D / ASD I-2 276–98 / CWE 25 50–64).
- 2 *saluta libenter*; *Disticha Catonis*, *Breves sententiae* 9 (ed Marcus Boas [Amsterdam 1952] 14). 'Cato' was a popular medieval collection of moral precepts in verse commonly but erroneously ascribed to Cato the Censor. Like Aesop's fables, it was long an honoured text in schools, sometimes prescribed by statute. Luther was grateful to divine providence for the preservation of two such valuable books for school use (WA *Tischreden* 3 or *Clemen* 8 no 3490). Cf Richard Hazleton 'The Christianization of "Cato"' *Mediaeval Studies* 19 (1957) 157–73.
An edition of 'Cato' by Erasmus is included in his *Opuscula* (Louvain 1514; see Ep 298 introduction).
- 3 Demea is a harsh and stingy father in Terence *Adelphi*.
- 4 Cf *De civilitate* LB I 1042B / CWE 25 287.
- 5 To avoid suggesting the proverbial hostility between stepmothers and stepchildren. See *Adagia* II ii 95.
- 6 even though ... respect] Added in the March 1533 edition. For the Greek phrase see Homer *Iliad* 4.313, 9.115; *Odyssey* 14.166.
- 7 Cf Plautus *Poenulus* 365–7.
- 8 The famous friend of Augustus and patron of Virgil, Horace, and Propertius
- 9 unique ... age] Replaced 'glory of letters' (already used in line 25) in the August 1523 edition
- 10 *belli homunculi*. Cf Gellius 13.11.3; Allen Ep 1301:18–19.

- 11 Cf Cicero *De oratore* 2.262; Gal 6:7; *Adagia* I viii 78. The phrase is also found in *De constructione* LB I 178F / ASD I-4 140:523.
- 12 Cf Hesiod *Works and Days* 721.
- 13 'Speak to your betters respectfully and briefly, to equals cordially and agreeably' (*De civilitate* LB I 1041D / CWE 25 286). But Erasmus criticizes excessive and superstitious fastidiousness in the use of titles (*De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 373F-374E / ASD I-2 293:15-294:13 / CWE 25 60-2).
- 14 Johannes Sapidus (Johann Witz) and Beatus Rhenanus, both natives of Sélestat and firm friends of Erasmus. Witz was a schoolmaster there and in Strasbourg for many years. Erasmus dedicated *Antibarbari* to him; see Epp 323 introduction and 1110. See also CWE 85-6 26-7, 439-40 no 3 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 315 no 97. On Beatus Rhenanus, whose editorial services to Erasmus at the Froben press were so highly and justly valued by him (except in the publishing of the first and unauthorized edition of the *Colloquies*), see their correspondence in Allen and BRE. A long poetic eulogy of Erasmus by Sapidus, *Apotheosis Erasmi*, written a few months after Erasmus' death in 1536, is printed in LB I *** *** *** 3 verso - *** *** *** 2 recto. On Sapidus and Beatus Rhenanus see further CEBR.
- 15 Gen 43:23; Judg 6:23, 19:20; 1 Sam 25:6
- 16 *malim habere quam avere*, a laboured pun on *Ave* 'Hail' or 'Farewell' (line 28), *habere* 'have,' and *avere* 'desire,' 'long for'
- 17 Then why . . . Rome? Added in the July-August edition
- 18 Virgil *Georgics* 1.75
- 19 A pleasantry Erasmus used more than once. See Allen Ep 3048:74-80.
- 20 What decorum requires is prescribed in *De civilitate* LB I 1034C-D / CWE 25 275.
- 21 A classical title, but more appropriate to Christ than to Jove (*De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 372B-C / ASD I-2 290:40-5 / CWE 25 58).
- 22 *bonis avibus* (*Adagia* I i 75), a phrase repeated immediately and in lines 29-30 below (*bonis auspiciis*) and often used by Erasmus
- 23 *Adagia* II vi 17
- 24 *animae dimidium*; Horace *Odes* 1.3.8, referring to Virgil
- 25 Cf *De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 374F-375D / ASD I-2 295:14-300:15 / CWE 25 62-4.
- 26 *Vale pancratice*. The pancratium in antiquity was a contest that included both boxing and wrestling, *Adagia* II viii 86 quotes Plautus *Bacchides* 248. See also Quintilian 2.8.13; Gellius 3.15.3.
- 27 *Adagia* II iv 75
- 28 Juvenal 10.356
- 29 Cf *De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 371D-F / ASD I-2 288:12-289:15 / CWE 25 57.
- 30 Erasmus was living in the Froben household in Basel when this passage first appeared in the 1522 editions of the *Colloquies*. Gertrud Lachner, whose father was a publisher and bookseller, became Johann Froben's second wife and the mother of Erasmus (on whom see 'Sport' n37). After Froben's death (1527) she married Johann Herwagen, who with Hieronymus Froben, the printer's oldest son, continued the printing business. Nicolaus Episcopus, later a member of the firm, was her son-in-law. Erasmus knew all these Frobens and their circle well and for many years. For his tribute to Johann Froben see Ep 1900.

- 31 Conradus Goclenius, Rutgerus Rescius, and Jan van Campen (Campensis), professors of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew respectively, comprised the faculty of the Collegium Trilingue in Louvain, where Erasmus knew them when he was living in Louvain 1517–21. On these friends of Erasmus see CEBR. On Goclenius see 'The Master's Bidding' n18. Many letters between Erasmus and Goclenius survive. 'Triple-tongued' characterizes the Collegium Trilingue, on which see 'The Epithalamium' 522:37–523:26. In another colloquy Johann Reuchlin too, as one skilled in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, is called 'triple-tongued'; see 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin' 247:9–10.
- 32 For other examples see 15:10–18:41 below.
- 33 Whether George had an original we do not know. Livinus is the name of Lieven Algoet of Ghent, one of Erasmus' servant-pupils (though not always a satisfactory one), 1519–26. See Allen Ep 1091 introduction and CEBR. Livinus is an interlocutor in some of the *formulae*, in 'The Imposture,' and 'The Sermon' and is named at the end of 'The Fabulous Feast.' On Erasmus' servant-pupils see the introduction to 'The Master's Bidding.'
- 34 The college where Erasmus first lived when he went to the University of Paris in 1495. See 'A Fish Diet' 715:16–717:1 for a vivid, satiric description of the rigorous existence at Montaigu, a college, Erasmus says, full of theology and of lice. Some thirty years after Erasmus was there Calvin and Ignatius Loyola studied at Montaigu.
- 35 Puns on the names of two persistent critics of Erasmus, Noël Bédard (Bédier or Bedda; cf *beta* 'beet') and Guillaume Duchesne (de Quercu; cf *quercus* 'oak'), of the faculty of theology in the University of Paris. Bédard resented the words 'a beet savours of wisdom,' a gibe relished by one of his former pupils at Montaigu who came across it in this passage (Allen Ep 1963:16–25). It comes from Martial 13:13. Bédard was a tireless critic of Erasmus and influential in persuading the Paris faculty of theology to condemn him. See Allen Ep 1571 introduction. On Duchesne see Allen Ep 1188:29n. He and Bédard are both present in 'The Philological Society.' See also CEBR and Farge *Orthodoxy and Reform* 186–96.
- 36 The pattern of question and answer in the preceding four lines occurs again in 'Cyclops' 870:11–14.
- 37 Mushrooms . . . preaching.] Added in the July–August 1522 edition. Bores and simpletons were proverbially called 'mushrooms' (*Adagia* iv i 38, iv x 98).
The allusions above to Montaigu and Bédard are the earliest mention in the *Colloquia* to Erasmus' residence in France. His first years in Paris (1495–9) played a very significant part in his subsequent personal and intellectual life, as his writings and correspondence testify. Renaudet *Préforme et humanisme* is a comprehensive description of the academic and religious milieux of Paris 1494–1517. See also Margaret Mann Phillips' *Erasmus et les débuts de la Réforme française* (Paris 1934) and her *Erasmus and the Northern Renaissance* (London 1949; rev ed 1981); J.-C. Margolin 'Erasmus et la France' *Wolfenbütteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissanceforschung* 7 (1988) 47–73.
- 38 *pancratica*; cf n26 above.
- 39 *pancratice*. See preceding note.

- 40 *taurice*; not found in classical Latin, but the word obviously connotes vigour and robustness.
- 41 *Adagia* I viii 43
- 42 *bona verba* (Terence *Andria* 204), a tag Erasmus often uses
- 43 In Terence *Phormio* 454. See *Adagia* I iii 7.
- 44 On Nature as stepmother see 'The Epicurean' 1084:34–5 and n74.
- 45 Strait between Boeotia and Euboea with fabulously strong and frequent tides. See Plato *Phaedo* 90c and Erasmus *Adagia* I ix 62. 'We say an inconstant person is a Euripus' (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 853A).
- 46 Which Erasmus still remembered from his diet at Montaignu. See 'A Fish Diet' 716:32–3.
- 47 Writing to Wolsey, John Colet advised avoidance of physicians as the right way to preserve health (Lupton *Life of Colet* 227). Despite a few formal bows to the medical profession in *Encomium medicinae* (1518) LB I 537A–544E / ASD I-4 163–86 / CWE 29 31–50, written at the request of a medical friend (Allen I 18:19–21 / CWE Ep 1341A:665–7), Erasmus shared the common scepticism. Both good and bad doctors appear in 'The Funeral,' but those attending George (767:3–35) are more typical of Erasmus' literary treatment of the guild than his lines about Cornelius' physician (776:11–15).
- 48 This is the theme of 'The Seraphic Funeral.'
- 49 In *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* (1532), his replies to attacks on his writings by Paris theologians, Erasmus denies that this passage mocks devotion (LB IX 929C–930C).
- 50 These lines too were censured by the same critics; see LB IX 930C–F. On striking bargains with saints see 'The Shipwreck' 355:28–356:25.
- 51 Cf 'A Pilgrimage' 647:24–648:4; 'The Knight without a Horse' 885:22–886:24.
- 52 French armies had fought campaigns in Italy since 1494, and from 1521 the nation was intermittently at war with the empire, but 'calamities' probably alludes to various recurrent troubles domestic and political rather than to a specific disaster.
- 53 Evils which Erasmus, as pacifist and Christian moralist, preached against all his life in many of his writings, including the *Colloquies*. See 'A Fish Diet' 687:41–689:18 and 'Charon' on the ambition of rulers.
- 54 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.127–8 (the south wind is harmful and can cause large waves)
- 55 The thesis of Erasmus' *Institutio principis christiani*. Cf 'Things and Names' 811:4–5 and n5.
- 56 As Erasmus often complains, for example in 'Charon' 822:10–41
- 57 In fact, the phrase Erasmus uses, 'frigidam suffundant,' means the opposite, 'pour cold water on.' He thinks the Latin expression may refer to the practice of dousing racehorses with cold water to incite them to run faster, though he also suggests it may allude to the practice of coppersmiths, who sprinkle cold water on a fire to make it burn more brightly. See *Adagia* I x 51.
- 58 Cf Terence *Eunuchus* 781; *Adagia* I iii 94.
- 59 Diana, goddess of the hunt. Cf *Adagia* I i 72, which gives examples of similar phrases invoking or describing the wrath or favour of the gods (LB II 56E / CWE 31 118).
- 60 Cf *Adagia* I vii 74, I viii 67.

- 61 *Adagia* I viii 9
- 62 Cf *Adagia* I v 16.
- 63 Juvenal 10.22
- 64 Capitalized in the text and hence to be taken as a personal name; if not capitalized the sentence is more flippant: 'Your little bitch has pupped.'
- 65 So also 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 469:8
- 66 In *Odyssey* 14.151–3 a reward is promised when a prediction comes true. Here Livinus promises George, as a bringer of good news (*evangelium* 'gospel'), a gift but instead of money offers him a gem, eagle-stone (*aetites*), which was fabled to ease childbirth. See Aelian *De natura animalium* 1.35; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 37.187; *Adagia* III vii 1 LB II 881D; *De copia* CWE 24 453:11; Picinelli *Mundus symbolicus* book 12 no 40.
- 67 Erasmus once (1512) had a servant-pupil by this name (Allen Ep 263:1 / CWE Ep 263:2).
- 68 *barbatulus*. So 'The Young Man and the Harlot' 382:6. As every writer on Erasmus' Latinity points out, he was fond of diminutives for ironic or depreciatory use and coined many, for example *ecclesiola*, *doctorculus* (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatus* LB IX 946C). *Muliercula* (see n73 below) is a favourite.
- 69 Cf *Adagia* I i 72. Cyprian's reference to the loss of his money comes from Erasmus' own experience. In January 1500, when he was about to cross the Channel from Dover, English customs officers seized – quite legally, it seems – eighteen of the twenty pounds he carried – a disaster he never forgot. 'So much did it cost me to learn a single British law' (Allen I 16:19–27 / CWE Ep 1341A:583–92 and n130, also CWE Ep 119:9n).
- 70 Giovanni Balbus was the compiler of a Latin glossary and grammar, *Catholicon* (c 1286), 'a complete collection of errors' (*Antibarbari* CWE 23 67:4–5) in Erasmus' opinion. On *Catholicon* see further 'The Philological Society' n10. Erasmus may have wished to allude to Girolamo Balbi, a humanist and poet in Paris before Erasmus' residence there but known to him by name, and about whose work he was unenthusiastic; see Allen Ep 23:47n and CEBR.
- 71 In 1523–4 and again in 1525 Erasmus complained that a German Dominican, Lambertus Campester, had issued a spurious edition of the *Colloquies* (shortly after the appearance of the Froben edition of August 1523) in which he audaciously and maliciously changed parts of the text, pretending the changes were corrections by Erasmus (Allen I 9:37–12:27 / CWE Ep 1341A:307–421, Allen Ep 1581:411–14). Whatever seemed unflattering to the French he shifted to the English; anything against Paris he shifted to London. Here he substituted 'Briton' for 'Frenchman'; at line 11 'Saxon' for 'capon'; at line 13 'Briton' for 'Frenchman'; at line 14 'Bohemian' for 'hen'; at line 24 'British manner' for 'French manner'; at line 29 'London' for 'Paris'; at lines 37–8 'panther' and 'lilies' for 'beetle' and 'eagle.' In many other colloquies, including 'The Profane Feast' and 'The Godly Feast,' he made similar or even more absurd tendentious changes. On Campester see BE 2nd series *Colloquia* I 364–8; Alphonse Roersch 'Un contrefacteur d'Erasmus; Lambertus Campester' in *Gedenkschrift* 113–29; M.-H. Laurent 'Autour de la controverse luthérienne en France: Lambert Campester' *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 35 (1939) 283–90. More recently Bierlaire has shown, with the aid of a hitherto unavailable copy of the elusive

Campester edition, how many other substantive changes Campester made in his effort to turn Erasmus' words and judgments upside down; see 'La première édition falsifiée des *Colloques*' in *Dix conférences sur Erasme* ed Claude Blum (Paris and Geneva 1988) 79–93.

In the present passage we meet the usual Latin puns on *Gallus* 'Gaul,' *gallus* 'cock,' *gallina* 'hen.' Cf 'Sport' 79:19–21, 'Additional *formulae*' 120:19–20 and n8, 'The Profane Feast' 142:32–8 and nn69–70, 'The Old Men's Chat' 454:26–8 and n49; Allen Epp 1353:252–3, 2202:20–1.

- 72 A commonplace. It is even quoted in the decrees of the Council of Trent (session 14 [1551] Decree on reform, canon 6; Tanner II 716).

- 73 *mulierculis*, literally 'little women,' often used by Erasmus of servant girls, housewives, 'simple women,' 'mere women' of inferior social standing and little or no education, not of such women as the well-bred and clever Maria in 'Courtship' or Magdalia in 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady.' Depending on the context, the term can be merely descriptive, disparaging, or ironic.

- 74 *Adagia* I v 30

- 75 Any French girl will do as much as thirty men to improve your French (Allen Ep 2079:16–17). French can easily be learned within a year (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 477C). *Adagia* IV v 55 includes a story of a youth who, sent to France to learn French, complained after four days that he had not yet learned it. *De pronuntiatione* comments on the pronunciation of 'mulierculae Parisinae' (LB I 931C / ASD I-4 45:44–5 / CWE 26 403).

- 76 Latin verses, that is. When certain misguided travellers, returning from France, wish to show how Frenchified they are, they affect French pronunciation – mispronunciation – of Latin (*De pronuntiatione* LB I 934D / ASD I-4 50:219–26 / CWE 26 409). The Basel printer Johann Amerbach warns his two sons, students in Paris, against imitating the French accent in using Latin and the unfortunate French failure to discriminate between short and long syllables (AK Ep 184:48–54). Erasmus calls attention to the regrettable modern habit of mixing Latin with the vernacular (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 476D). On Erasmus and modern languages see Rachel Giese 'Erasmus' Knowledge and Estimate of the Vernacular' *Romanic Review* 28 (1937) 3–18 and L.-E. Halkin 'Erasme et les langues' *Revue des langues vivantes* 35 (1969) 566–79; on efforts to reform pronunciation of Latin, Thomas Pyles 'Tempest in Teapot: Reform in Latin Pronunciation' *ELH A Journal of English Literary History* 6 (1939) 138–64; on Erasmus' efforts in particular, J.J. Bateman 'The Development of Erasmus' Views on the Correct Pronunciation of Latin and Greek' in *Classical Studies Presented to Ben Edwin Perry* Illinois Studies in Language and Literature 58 (Urbana 1969) 46–65; on Erasmus' judgments of vernacular languages, Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* 91–150.

- 77 Richard Pace in *De fructu qui ex doctrina percipitur* (1517) tells of a French priest who, when rebuked for accenting words on the wrong syllables, retorted 'We French don't care about the quantity of syllables' (*De fructu* ed and trans Frank Manley and Richard S. Sylvester [New York 1967] 103). On Pace and his book, which Erasmus disliked, see CWE Ep 776:4n. On pronunciation and related topics see *De pronuntiatione* LB I 913–68 / ASD I-4 1–103 / CWE 26 347–475.

- 78 These lines (cf 15:19–20 and n52 above) offended some French readers (Allen Ep 2261:60–1). The eagle was the symbol of the Holy Roman Empire; the beetle here, Francis I, was constantly at war with the emperor, Charles v. Enmity between beetle and eagle is the theme of an Aesopic fable; see *Babrius and Phaedrus* ed and trans Ben Edwin Perry, Loeb Classical Library (London 1965) Appendix 422 no 3. Erasmus expands and interprets the fable in *Adagia* III vii 1: *Scarabeus aquilam quaerit*, one of his best essays on kings and their quarrels (English translation in Phillips ‘*Adages*’ 229–63).
- 79 Terence *Phormio* 152
- 80 *lepidum caput*; Terence *Adelphi* 966
- 81 Messenger
- 82 A joke about Nasica (probably Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica, consul in 191 bc) calling on the poet Ennius, borrowed from Cicero *De oratore* 2.68.276.
- 83 *Adagia* I i 35
- 84 Another familiar story, found in Lucilius fragment 251; Cicero *Ad familiares* 7.24.1 and *De oratore* 2.276; Plutarch *Moralia* 759f–760a *Amatorius*; Erasmus *Adagia* I vi 4 and *Apophthegmata* LB IV 291D–E. Names differ in different versions, but the situation is the same: while a complaisant husband pretends to be asleep another man comes to the house for an assignation with his wife. When the supposed sleeper becomes aware that a servant is stealing some wine, he looks up suddenly and says ‘I don’t sleep for everyone.’
- 85 *Adagia* IV iv 57
- 86 *Adagia* III ii 20, from Plautus *Aulularia* 73
- 87 A word from Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 5.29
- 88 Erasmus had a friend and correspondent by this name, Alaard of Amsterdam; see CWE Epp 433 and 676 introductions.
- 89 The name is borrowed from Jan de Neve, of the College of the Lily in Louvain. He served as rector of the university in 1515. Erasmus knew him well in Louvain in 1517–21. His *Opuscula* (1514) is dedicated to Neve; see CWE Epp 298 introduction, Allen Ep 304:157–60 / CWE Ep 304:173–7. Ep 1347 opens with a eulogy of him and commends his wit and sense of humour but regrets his stubbornness in argument. On Alaard and Neve see CEBR.
- 90 *Antibarbari* and, in the *Colloquies*, ‘The Godly Feast’ have just such a setting for dialogues.
- 91 Smith (*Key* 7) suggested that Giles is Erasmus’ and More’s close friend Pieter Gillis of Antwerp and that Leonard is Leonardus Priccardus of Aachen (Allen Ep 972 introduction), another friend. Like Giles in the dialogue, Gillis was the father of twins (by his first wife, whom he married in 1514). Henry de Vocht (*Jérôme de Busleyden Humanistica Lovaniensia* 9 [Tournhout 1950] 465) pointed out that in the dialogue Giles also has a grown daughter and three sons, one of whom is already married, while Gillis was only twenty-seven years old in 1514. But the dialogue is fiction, not biography, and Erasmus may be merely exercising his author’s privilege of mixing fiction with fact, as he often does in these dialogues. Erasmus wrote an epithalamium for Gillis’ first marriage in August 1514, but it was not printed until ten years later. See ‘The Epithalamium.’
- 92 Sixteen and seventeen were common marriageable ages for girls. The bride in ‘A Marriage in Name Only’ is sixteen (844:10). See ‘Courtship’ n47. Erasmus

says in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (LB v 666D) that it is not unusual nowadays, 'especially in France,' for girls to marry when 'scarcely ten,' an assertion we need not take too seriously.

- 93 *θεομαχεῖν, vel potius μοναχομαχεῖν*. Erasmus may have invented the second word, as he invented others. For some examples see C.R. Thompson 'Some Greek and Grecized Words in Renaissance Latin' *American Journal of Philology* 64 (1943) 333–5; D.F.S. Thomson 'The Latinity of Erasmus' in *Erasmus* ed T.A. Dorey (Albuquerque 1970) 115–38.
- 94 The question treated briefly in this passage, a girl's insistent desire to enter a religious order, is developed in two colloquies of 1523, 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' and 'The Repentant Girl.'
- 95 Of arts. Cf 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n69. Johann Amerbach, whose correspondence with his sons Bruno and Basilius, students at the University of Paris 1501–6, provides extensive and delightful commentary on such passages in the *Colloquies*, admonishes them in 1501 to study hard, 'lest it be said after your return that I sent young donkeys to Paris and they came back complete asses' (AK Ep 128:14–15).
- 96 Mopsus is the name of a shepherd in Virgil *Eclogues* 5 and 8; Dromo of a slave in Terence *Adelphi*, *Andria*, and *Heautontimorumenos*.
- 97 Erasmus remembered similar passages in Pliny *Letters* 1.9.8 and Seneca *Epistulae morales* 1.1–2. He moralizes on the theme in 'The Poetic Feast' 399:38–400:17.
- 98 Proverbial; in one version a person is struck dumb if the wolf sees him first. Cf *Adagia* II viii 6, III viii 56, IV v 50. See 'The Fabulous Feast' n60.
- 99 The unlucky side; *Adagia* II iv 37
- 100 A commonplace; Ovid *Ars amatoria* 2.2
- 101 The Latin is a phrase from Terence *Eunuchus* 566. Chremes in Terence's *Andria* has a daughter.
- 102 *Adagia* I ii 15
- 103 Names of slaves in Terence *Adelphi*
- 104 Undoubtedly a reference to the *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass*
- 105 Virgil *Eclogues* 3.59
- 106 This sound advice is emphasized in Erasmus' writings on education. The schoolboys in 'Sport' 75:33–4 and n9 remind the master, to their advantage, that Quintilian, an unimpeachable authority, agrees. The quotation is from Juvenal 11.208.
- 107 In Allen Ep 56:63–4 / CWE Ep 56:74–5 Erasmus alludes to the Elder Pliny's dictum that all time not spent in study is wasted (from the Younger Pliny's famous description [*Letters* 3.5.16] of his uncle).
- 108 A more emphatic figure in Latin than in English; see *Adagia* I viii 22.
- 109 Cf Catullus 64:62. The English tag would be 'sea of troubles.'
- 110 For other examples of promising cf *De copia* 1.122 CWE 24:494–6.
- 111 *ut totum Sapidum exeras*. On Sapidus see n14 above.
- 112 *Adagia* I i 1
- 113 *Adagia* I viii 19, citing Terence *Heautontimorumenos* 342
- 114 Cf *De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 475E–478A / ASD I-2 561:6–562:12 / CWE 25 241–2.

- 115 See 'Sport' 77:38–9.
- 116 Homer *Odyssey* 3.300, 7.277, 15.482
- 117 Nemesis; there was a statue of her at Rhamnus in Attica. She punished the presumptuous. See *Parabola* CWE 23 245:20–2; *Adagia* II vi 38.
- 118 *Adagia* III viii 94
- 119 This gamble . . . us.] Added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 120 Because the owl was sacred to Athena its flight was deemed a symbol of victory by the Athenians. *Adagia* I i 76.
- 121 Cf *De copia* 1.83 CWE 24 461–2; *De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 470A–472E / ASD I-2 549:25–554:22 / CWE 25 231–6.
- 122 See *De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 448E–450A / ASD I-2 499:1–502:11 / CWE 25 195–7.
- 123 'Diary' or record. On this term see Gellius 5.18.6–8.

RASH VOWS

De votis temere susceptis

First printed in the March 1522 edition without a distinctive title; in later editions called *De visendo loca sacra* and *De votis temere susceptis*.

The names Arnold and Cornelius may have been borrowed from two of Erasmus' friends, Arnoldus Bostius of Ghent (CWE Ep 53 introduction) and Cornelis Gerard (CWE Ep 17 introduction), one of his earliest correspondents and confidants. Bostius was the person to whom Erasmus had written (Allen Ep 75:13–19 / CWE Ep 75:15–22) about his vain hope of visiting Rome, a fact that may account for the name Arnold in this dialogue. On both see CEBR.

'Qui multum peregrinantur raro sanctificantur.' The moral and spiritual risks to which pilgrims were exposed were a common complaint of reformers long before this colloquy was written. Even their defenders, such as Thomas More, recognized that pilgrimages were liable to gross abuses (*Dialogue concerning Heresies* Yale CWM 6 part 1 51–61, 94–101 / *More English Works* II 24–33, 58–63); the reformers invariably opposed them. Erasmus' most extensive and most readable contribution to the literature of pilgrimages is his autobiographical colloquy 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake,' but he often refers to the subject in his major works on religion and elsewhere. His criticism of abuses, while expressed with his characteristic verve and wit, was fundamentally the same as that by other writers equally sincere if less gifted.

Though brief, and far less impressive than 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake,' 'Rash Vows' attracted attention. In 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' (1526) Erasmus has more to say about this colloquy than any other; see 1098:25–1100:9. Some parts were condemned by one of his critics, the Carmelite Nicolaas Baechem (see nn14 and 24 below), and even his friend Vives reported dissatisfaction with it (Allen Ep 1732:29–39).

John Foxe's narrative of some sixty cases of persons in London diocese who abjured when charged with heresy in 1531–3 includes the recantation of an Augustinian friar, Thomas Topley, who said: 'All christian men beware of consenting to Erasmus' Fables, for by consenting to them, they have caused me to shrink in my faith . . . I read in Colloquium [he means this colloquy, which he summarizes] . . . of certain pilgrims . . . Thus I mused of these opinions so greatly, that my mind was almost withdrawn from devotion to saints' (*Acts and Monuments* v 40). He adds that fables of this kind, in addition to indulgence in dancing and tennis, did much to impair his piety.



The Pilgrim

Drawing by Hans Holbein the Younger in the margin of a copy of the 1515 Froben edition of *Moriae encomium* (fol M4)
Holbein's drawings were not reproduced in the book until the Basel edition of 1676 appeared. They became well known to readers of Erasmus in Leclerc's edition of 1703-6 (LB IV 405-504).
Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kupferstichkabinett

ARNOLD, CORNELIUS

Arnold Greetings, Cornelius, greetings! It's ages since I've seen you.

Cornelius Greetings to you, too, my dear fellow.

5 **Arnold** We'd given you up for lost. Where have you been wandering so long?¹

Cornelius In hell.²

Arnold Not unlikely, since you've come back to us so dirty, thin, and pale.

Cornelius Actually I'm here from Jerusalem, not from the underworld.³

10 **Arnold** What god or gale drove you there?

Cornelius What drives countless others?

Arnold Folly, if I'm not mistaken.

Cornelius Then I'm not the only one guilty of this fault.

Arnold What were you hunting there?

15 **Cornelius** How to be wretched.

Arnold You could have found that at home. Anything there you consider worth seeing?

Cornelius To be frank with you, almost nothing. Some monuments of antiquity are pointed out, all of which I thought faked and contrived for the
20 purpose of enticing naïve and credulous folk.⁴ What's more, I don't think it's known for certain where ancient Jerusalem was.

Arnold So what did you see?

Cornelius A great deal of barbarity everywhere.

Arnold You don't return any the holier?

25 **Cornelius** Oh, no – worse in every respect.⁵

Arnold Richer, then?

Cornelius No – purse emptier than an old snakeskin.⁶

Arnold Then don't you regret having undertaken such a long and useless journey?

30 **Cornelius** I'm not ashamed, because I've so much company in my folly, and I've no regrets, because they would do no good now.

Arnold So you bring back no profit at all from such a hard journey?

Cornelius A large profit.

Arnold What might that be?

35 **Cornelius** Hereafter I'll enjoy life more.

Arnold Because it's enjoyable to recall hardships when they're over and done with?⁷

Cornelius Partly that, but not entirely.

Arnold Is there any other reward?

40 **Cornelius** Oh, yes.

Arnold What? Tell me.

Cornelius Whenever I like I'll have the vast pleasure of impressing both myself and others at gatherings or parties by telling lies⁸ about my travels.

Arnold Yes, you're not far off the mark.⁹

Cornelius And I'll take equal pleasure in listening to others lie about things
5 they never heard or saw – something they do so brazenly that, though their
yarns are sillier than Sicilian nonsense,¹⁰ they convince even themselves
they're telling the truth.

Arnold Great fun! You haven't spent your time and trouble for nothing, as
the saying is.¹¹

10 **Cornelius** No, I think this is a bit smarter than what some do – hire themselves
out for military service, the school of every vice,¹² for a trifling wage.

Arnold But to take pleasure in lying is ill-bred.

Cornelius Still, it's more gentlemanly than to enjoy spreading or hearing
spiteful slander or to waste time and money at dice.

15 **Arnold** I'm forced to agree with you¹³ in that opinion.

Cornelius But there's another advantage too.

Arnold What?

Cornelius If I've a very close friend who's caught by this madness, I'll warn
him to stay at home, as sailors who have been shipwrecked warn those about
20 to go to sea what danger to beware of.

Arnold I wish you had warned *me* in time!

Cornelius What? Has this sort of contagion got you too? Has the contagion
reached you too?

Arnold I've visited Rome and Compostella.¹⁴

25 **Cornelius** Good God, what a comfort to have you as companion in my
madness! What Pallas¹⁵ put that into your head?

Arnold Not Pallas but Folly herself,¹⁶ especially when I had at home a wife
still young and vigorous, children, and a family dependent upon me and
supported by my daily labour.

30 **Cornelius** Must have been something very serious to drag you away from
your loved ones. Tell me about it, won't you?

Arnold I'm ashamed to mention it.

Cornelius Not to me. I'm caught in the same trap, you know.

Arnold Some of us neighbours were drinking. One man, when the wine
35 had gone to our heads, proclaimed his intention of paying his respects to St
James, another to St Peter. Thereupon one or two others present promised
to go along. Finally they decided all should go together. I didn't want to
seem less of a good fellow than they were, so I promised to go too. Soon
we began to discuss which place to visit, Rome or Compostella. After due
40 deliberation¹⁷ it was voted that we should all, with good luck, set out next
day for both places.

Cornelius A solemn decree, fitter to be written in wine than on bronze!¹⁸

Arnold Next a large bowl went round. When each in turn had drunk from it, the vow was inviolable.

Cornelius A strange devotion! But did everyone return safe and sound?¹⁹

- 5 **Arnold** All but three. One, who died *en route*, told us to give his greeting to Peter and James, another died at Rome and directed us to salute his wife and children; the third we left behind at Florence, wretchedly ill – he's in heaven now, I suppose.

Cornelius Was he so devout?

- 10 **Arnold** On the contrary, a complete good-for-nothing.

Cornelius What makes you think he's in heaven, then?

Arnold Because he had a purse bulging with the most generous indulgences.²⁰

- 15 **Cornelius** I understand; but it's a long way to heaven, and not a very safe one (so I hear), on account of robbers who inhabit the middle region of the air.

Arnold True, but he was well protected by documents.²¹

Cornelius Written in what language?

Arnold Roman.

Cornelius So he's safe.

- 20 **Arnold** Yes, unless he should happen to meet some spirit²² ignorant of Latin.²³ Then he'd have to go back to Rome and get a new document.

Cornelius Do they sell bulls there to the dead too?²⁴

Arnold Of course.

- 25 **Cornelius** But meanwhile²⁵ let me warn you against loose talk, for spies²⁶ are everywhere now.

- Arnold** As for me, I certainly don't disparage indulgences, but I laugh at the foolishness of my fellow drinker. Though in other respects the most frivolous trifler, he pinned his whole hope²⁷ of salvation, so to speak, on a piece of parchment instead of on a moral life. – But when shall we enjoy that
30 pleasure you were talking of just now?

Cornelius When it's convenient. We'll arrange a little drinking party, invite the men of our order, compete in lying, and have a great time by taking turns telling whoppers.

Arnold All right, let's do it.

NOTES

1 This manner of opening, common in Lucian's dialogues, is used in other colloquies as well, for example 'The Soldier and the Carthusian,' 'The New Mother,' 'A Pilgrimage,' 'The Funeral,' and 'A Marriage in Name Only.'

2 Cf Lucian *Menippus* 1 (from Euripides *Heracles* 523–4, *Hecuba* 1–2).

- 3 Of the very many pilgrims who made the long voyage from Venice to the Holy Land in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a few left valuable accounts of their experiences; for example Bernhard von Breydenbach *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* (Mainz 1486), lavishly illustrated; Arnold von Harff *The Pilgrimage of Arnold von Harff, knight, from Cologne, through Italy, Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Ethiopia, Nubia, Palestine, Turkey, France and Spain, which he accomplished in the years 1496 to 1499*, trans (from the German) and ed Malcolm Letts, Hakluyt Society 2nd series 94 (London 1946); and Felix Fabri, whose record of his two pilgrimages in 1480 and 1483 is translated by A. Stewart in vols 7–10 of the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society (London 1892–7) and summarized with ample quotations by H.F.M. Prescott in *Friar Felix at Large* (New Haven 1950; paperback repr 1960). William Wey, fellow of Eton, made two voyages to Jerusalem in 1458 and 1462 as well as an earlier one to Compostella in 1456, and left interesting accounts in his *Itineraries* (Roxburghe Club, London 1857; a large coloured map of the Holy Land, attributed to Wey, was printed for the Roxburghe Club in 1867). It is possible that Wey wrote the *Information for Pilgrims* printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1498 (repr London 1893). Wey was eager to secure the indulgences granted to pilgrims and their relatives. *The Pylgrymage of Sir Richard Guylforde* (1506) ed Henry Ellis, Camden Society 51 (London 1851) gives detailed descriptions of shrines in Jerusalem. See also 'A Pilgrimage' n5. Of all the records of pilgrimages by the English the one that is now best known was unprinted and virtually unknown until half a century ago: *The Book of Margery Kempe*, first edited by W. Butler-Bowdon (Oxford 1936) and then in EETS original series 212 by S.B. Meech and H.E. Allen (Oxford 1940). Margery made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1413 and to Compostella in 1417. St Ignatius Loyola's pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1523 is described in chapter 4 of his autobiography (which, like Margery Kempe's, was dictated to an amanuensis).
- 4 Replying in 1532 to the Paris faculty of theology's censure of this paragraph, Erasmus says he has heard the same scepticism about the antiquities of Jerusalem voiced by well-educated travellers. 'I don't think Christianity would suffer much if no one hurried to Jerusalem but sought the traces of Christ in books and devoted the labour and expense to relieving the poor' (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 931B; and see Allen Ep 858:408–18 / CWE Ep 858 433–14).
- 5 A character in 'The Old Men's Chat' who had gone to Jerusalem tells friends he came back worse than he went (458:35–8). Cf the comments of visitors to Rome in 'Benefices' 47:23–7 and 'The Young Man and the Harlot' 384:29–35.
- 6 *nudior leberide*; *Adagia* I i 26
- 7 *Adagia* II iii 43, IV ix 27. See the opening lines of 'The Shipwreck' and 'Penny-Pinching'; also 'A Feast of Many Courses' 805:19–21.
- 8 A subject that frequently interested Erasmus. See 'The Liar and the Man of Honour.'
- 9 *Adagia* I x 30
- 10 Trifles; *Adagia* II iv 10
- 11 *Adagia* I iv 62: *Oleum et operam perdi*
- 12 As Erasmus insists in 'Military Affairs,' 'The Soldier and the Carthusian,' and 'Cyclops'

- 13 'Follow in your footsteps,' proverbial. Cf *Adagia* II vii 12: *Pedibus in sententiam discedere*.
- 14 Rome, Jerusalem, and Santiago de Compostela (spelled Compostella in Erasmus' texts) in north-western Spain, reputedly the burial place of James the apostle, were the most popular destinations of Christian pilgrims; *Exomologesis* LB v 167A. Of these Erasmus had visited Rome in 1509; see 'Benefices' n10. At the beginning of 'A Pilgrimage' Ogygius describes briefly his visit to Compostella.

This passage was condemned by Nicolaas Baechem (known as Egmondanus or Edmondanus in Erasmus' pages), prior of the Carmelites in Louvain and inquisitor (Allen Ep 878:13n), a persistent critic of Erasmus, who makes fun of him in 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin' 246:6–247:7. Baechem found fault with Erasmus' 1516 edition of the Greek New Testament, and with much that Erasmus published thereafter. In the March 1522 *Colloquies* he detected heresy in four passages. Two of these were in 'Rash Vows.' 'Over the wine, in sermons and conversations and lectures,' writes Erasmus, 'all his talk was of heresies' (Allen I 25:22–6 / CWE Ep 1341A:454–5, part of a long statement about Baechem's attacks). He complained of Baechem to two imperial officials (Epp 1299, 1300) and to the theologians of Louvain (Ep 1301), where he had both supporters and opponents. His friend and fellow countryman Pope Adrian VI then imposed silence on Baechem (Allen I 25:25–7 and Ep 1481:57–66 / CWE Epp 1341A:956–8, 1481:67–76). After Adrian's death in September 1523, Baechem renewed the campaign. Adrian's successor, Clement VII, promised Erasmus protection against detractors (Allen Ep 1438 and cf Ep 1481:66–8 / CWE Ep 1443B and cf Ep 1481:76–8), but only death (1526) could stop Baechem's tongue. An epitaph ascribed to Erasmus calls him, in a Homeric phrase, 'a vain burden of the earth' (CWE 85–6 374–5, 732 no 143 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 394 Appendix II-4). See Franz Bierlaire 'Le Libellus Colloquiorum de mars 1522 et Nicolas Baechem, dit Egmondanus' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* I 55–81 and his *Les Colloques d'Erasmus* 203–12; CEBR; and, in these volumes, especially 'Youth' nn53, 57, and 69, 'The Profane Feast' n76, and 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin' n3. Baechem thought 38:24–39:8 a mockery of vows. Erasmus retorts that such vows as Arnold and his carousing friends made – which should not have been made in the first place – are not binding if they interfere with what pertains closely to Christian doctrine or to salvation (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 646E). Erasmus is often emphatic about a man's moral obligation to fulfil duties towards his family and the 'good poor' instead of absenting himself on pilgrimages. So *Exomologesis* LB v 167A–B; *Ecclesiastes* LB v 816D; Allen Ep 1697:62–7; in the *Colloquies* 'The Old Men's Chat' 458:30–5, 'A Pilgrimage' 650:10–22, and 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1098:25–1100:4. Luther and Erasmus agreed that mercenary soldiers, such as those in 'Military Affairs' and 'The Soldier and the Carthusian,' were the worst examples of undutiful husbands and fathers, but at least they did not pretend to have pious motives. In *An den christlichen Adel* (1520), Luther vigorously condemned pilgrimages to Rome, a place where 'Christ counts for nothing and the pope for everything,' and he advises that no one be permitted to go there on pilgrimage without approval of his parish priest or the town authorities (WA 6 437:1–438:13 / LW 44 169–71). Pilgrimages are not always bad, he allows, but only too often they

are perils to piety. God has not commanded them; what he has commanded is that a man shall care for his wife and children. See also Rabelais *Gargantua and Pantagruel* 1.45.

On Baechem's further criticism see n24 below.

- 15 Athena, as goddess of wisdom
- 16 In *Moriae encomium* (LB IV 456B / ASD IV-3 138:240-1 / CWE 27 122) Folly claims as one of her own the man who, deserting his family, goes off to Jerusalem, Compostella, or Rome, where he has no business.
- 17 *senatusconsultum*, a solemn decree of the senate
- 18 Similarly in *Spongia* (1523) LB x 1653E-F Erasmus speaks of rash, foolish ventures convivially conceived and says such *senatusconsulta* are appropriately written in wine, not on bronze, as the Twelve Tables of Roman law supposedly were.
- 19 In *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 706A Erasmus quotes the aphorism 'There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip' (*Adagia* I v 1) and adds 'but more between Jerusalem and Holland.'
- 20 Wey (n3 above) gives a long list of indulgences available in Rome (142-52). In commenting on the *Consilium* of 1537 for reforming the church (see 'Benefices' n10), Luther refers sarcastically to a vulgar notion that the pope could compel angels to receive into paradise the souls of persons who die on pilgrimage to Rome (*Ratschlag eines Ausschusses etlicher Kardinäle, Papst Paulo III. Vorrede* WA 50 289:17-25 / LW 34 237). A possible source of this notion was the bull *Unigenitus Dei filius* (1343) of Pope Clement VI; see Denzinger-Schönmetzer *Enchiridion* nos 1025-7. In 1524 Erasmus accused Campester ('Patterns' n71) of changing this passage to make the speaker admit he had shared Lutheran ideas on indulgences but later regretted his error (Allen I 11:26-31 / Ep 1341A:381-6).
In an important letter to Albert of Brandenburg, cardinal-archbishop of Mainz (1519), on the causes of the Lutheran affair, Erasmus writes severely of the friars' scandalously extravagant claims for papal indulgences (Allen Ep 1033:119-37 / CWE Ep 1033:131-50). In 1527 he blames the whole trouble on the indulgence controversy, for which he considered the Dominicans were mainly responsible (Allen Epp 1875:137-54 and 2205:71-84). For a few years after Luther's *Theses* of 1517, indulgences were a subject of lively debate, but in the writings of Luther and Erasmus they were no longer a leading issue after 1523. On indulgences see further 'Military Affairs' 58:24-34 and nn24-6.
- 21 Here and in line 21 Arnold uses *diplomatibus*, *diploma* (a papal letter or brief), Cornelius in line 22 *bullā*, but in this context the terms are nearly synonymous. Erasmus' friend Pace jests satirically about the definition and etymology of *bullā* in *De fructu* ('Patterns' n77) 69-71.
- 22 *genium*. Attendant spirit, whether good or evil, in ancient pagan cults; in Christian lore, an angel. Cf *Adagia* I i 72.
- 23 The *Aureus tractatus exorcismique pulcherrimi* on exorcism by Silvestro Mazzolini Prierias (1501) instructs exorcists to use the vernacular language if the victim is unlettered, for the devil possessing the man will not readily answer in Latin, nor if he possesses an Italian will he answer in French (7-8 in the Bologna 1573 edition). See 'Exorcism' n11.
- 24 Baechem condemned lines 7-22, 'left behind at Florence . . . sold to the dead there too?' Erasmus denied attacking indulgences here or anywhere else; what he criticizes, he says, is reliance on bulls when this is not accompanied by

amendment of life (Allen Epp 1299:57–60, 1301:75–80 / cwe Epp 1299:63–6, 1301:140–8). How much indulgences for the dead are worth is a question even the pope cannot answer (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1090C).

- 25 But meanwhile . . . a moral life.] Except for 'spies are everywhere now,' which was added in the August 1523 edition, this passage was added in the July–August 1522 edition, clearly as a consequence of Baechem's strictures.
- 26 *Corycaeis*. Natives of Mount Corycus in ancient Pamphylia were said to mingle with traders in the market-place to learn the time of their sailing and then inform neighbouring pirates; *Adagia* I ii 44.
- 27 *proram ac puppim*, literally 'prow and stern' (*Adagia* I i 8). The bishop of London, Edmund Grindal, recalled (1564) concerning the custom of burying a man's indulgences from Rome with him that 'he that had the greatest plenty of them, to be cast with him into his grave when he was buried, (which I myself have seen done,) was counted the best prepared for death' (*Remains* ed William Nicholson [Cambridge 1843] 29).

IN PURSUIT OF BENEFICES

De captandis sacerdotiis

First printed in the March 1522 edition without an identifying title; later called *De sacerdotiis* and *De captandis sacerdotiis*.

Pamphagus ('omnivorous,' 'gluttonous') is the name of one of Actaeon's hounds in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 3.210 and appears in other sixteenth-century dialogues besides this one, for example in the Lucianic *Cymbalum mundi* of Bonaventure des Périers. See H. Busson 'Pamphagus' BHR 14 (1952) 289–93 and, on points of contact between Erasmus and des Périers, P.H. Nurse 'Erasmus et des Périers' BHR 30 (1968) 53–64. Whether Cocles ('one-eyed') had an original is more likely than not, for this was one of Erasmus' nicknames for Pieter Meghen ('Petrus unoculus' of Allen Ep 231:4), the talented scribe who copied manuscripts for Colet and others and sometimes carried letters for Erasmus. He appears also in 'Sport' and is often mentioned in Erasmus' correspondence. See CEBR.

Sacerdotium is the office of priesthood, but in this dialogue means any ecclesiastical living or appointment sought or held in a clerical career, in short, a benefice. Whether Pamphagus is already ordained, or had hoped to be 'priested' and get an immediate appointment or living in his visit to Rome, is not explained. What is clear enough is that he did not find preferment. 'A monkey without a tail is a priest without a benefice,' says a Franciscan preacher who was a contemporary of Erasmus (A.J. Krailsheimer *Rabelais and the Franciscans* [Oxford 1963] 66). 'To fish with a golden hook' at Rome or to 'exchange gold for lead' in the search for preferment constituted simony, a sin universally deplored and condemned by churchmen but stubbornly persistent and therefore a topic for moralists. The *Reformatio Sigismundi* (c 1438 and often reprinted in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) declares: 'No one is to be beneficed from Rome ... Much evil has come from the practice of permitting individuals to go to Rome to lobby there for benefices'; see Strauss *Manifestations of Discontent* 11. See also the complaint by the Diet of Nürnberg (1523) in Kidd *Documents* 116–7 no 61 (17, 18, 21); and for a famous review of such matters Paolo Sarpi's *History of Benefices* (c 1609, first published 1675) trans Peter Burke (New York 1967).

The banter about Pamphagus' big nose invites comparison with Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* 1.4.275–301. Sterne's elaborate *tour de force* in *Tristram Shandy* 3.27–42 and the introductory chapter of book 4, 'Slawkenbergius' Tale,' were confessedly indebted to Erasmus. Shandy names with gratitude 'the celebrated dialogue between Pamphagus and Cocles,' and his

father subjects the passage to the most discursive analysis it has ever received or is likely to receive. 'Learned men, brother Toby, don't write dialogues upon long noses for nothing. – I'll study the mystic and the allegoric sense' (3.36–7).

PAMPHAGUS, COCLES

Pamphagus Either my eyes are bad or I see Cocles, my old drinking companion.¹

5 **Cocles** No, your eyes don't deceive you at all; you see your good friend. You've been gone so many years that nobody had any hope of your return, nor did anyone know what part of the world you were in. Tell me, I beg you, where do you come from?

Pamphagus The antipodes.²

10 **Cocles** No, from the Fortunate Isles,³ I think.

Pamphagus I'm glad you recognized your friend, for I was afraid of returning home as Ulysses did.

Cocles What sort of homecoming was that?

15 **Pamphagus** His wife didn't know him. Only the poor old dog,⁴ wagging his tail, recognized his master.

Cocles How many years had he been away from home?

Pamphagus Twenty.

Cocles You've been gone more, yet your face didn't deceive me. – But who tells this story about Ulysses?

20 **Pamphagus** Homer.

Cocles Oh, he's said to be the father of all tall tales.⁵ Maybe his wife had taken another lover⁶ meanwhile and for that reason did not acknowledge her Ulysses.

25 **Pamphagus** On the contrary, there was never anybody more faithful. But Pallas had made Ulysses look old so he wouldn't be recognized.

Cocles How was he finally known?

Pamphagus By a corn on his toe.⁷ His nurse, now an aged crone, noticed it when washing his feet.

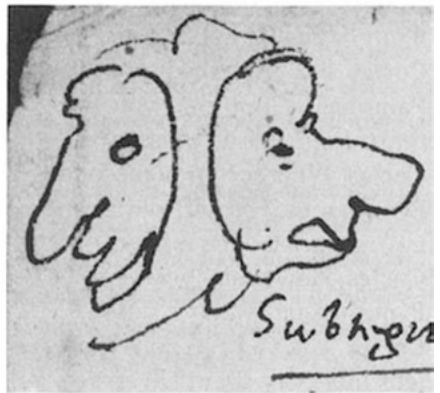
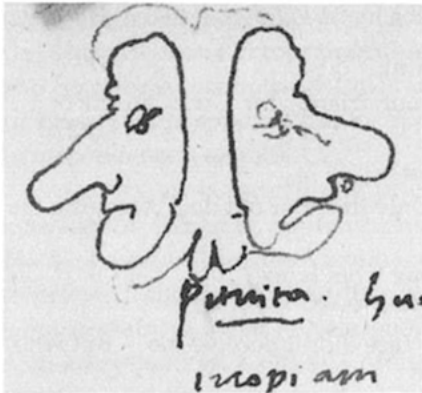
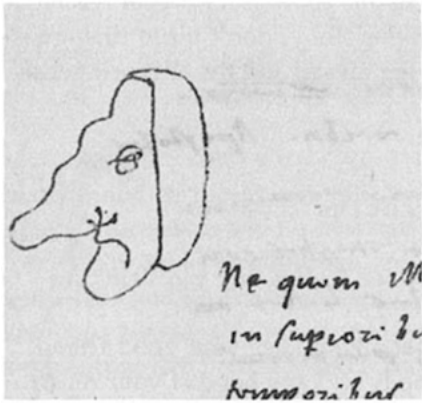
30 **Cocles** A meddling witch!⁸ And do you wonder if I recognized you by so remarkable a nose?⁹

Pamphagus I'm not ashamed of my nose.

Cocles You've no reason to be ashamed when the organ could be useful to you in so many ways.

Pamphagus Which ways?

35 **Cocles** First of all, as a lamp extinguisher, in place of a horn.



'So remarkable a nose'
 A subject for amusement for Erasmus not only in 'Benefices'
 but elsewhere, as his doodles show
 Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Handschriften-Abteilung,
 Erasmuslade A.IX.56, Bl 226 recto and 243 recto,
 C.VIA.68, S 146 and 143

Pamphagus Go on.

Cocles Then, if anything has to be pulled out of a deep hole, it will do instead of an elephant's trunk.

Pamphagus Wonderful!

5 **Cocles** If your hands are busy, you can use it as a peg.

Pamphagus Anything else?

Cocles If there are no bellows handy, you can use it to blow up the fire.

Pamphagus Well said. What else?

Cocles If the light annoys you when you're writing, it will provide a shade.

10 **Pamphagus** Ha, ha! Anything more to add?

Cocles In a naval battle it will serve as a grappling iron.

Pamphagus What about in a land battle?

Cocles As a shield.

Pamphagus What next?

15 **Cocles** As a wedge for splitting wood.

Pamphagus Right!

Cocles If you act as herald, it will be your trumpet; if you sound the call to battle, a bugle; if you dig, a spade; if you reap, a scythe; if you go to sea, an anchor; in the kitchen, a fork; when you're fishing, a fish-hook.

20 **Pamphagus** Lucky me! I didn't realize I carried such a useful piece of equipment.

Cocles But where in the world have you been all this while?

Pamphagus Rome.

25 **Cocles** Yet how could it happen that in the midst of all that splendour nobody knew you were alive?

Pamphagus Oh, good men are nowhere harder to find¹⁰ – so hard that often in the brightest daylight you won't see a single one on a busy square.¹¹

Cocles Well, do you come back loaded with benefices?

30 **Pamphagus** I hunted diligently, but Delia did not favour me.¹² For, as the saying goes, many fish with a golden hook there.

Cocles A foolish way to fish.¹³

Pamphagus Works beautifully for some people, but not everyone is lucky.

Cocles Aren't people exceptionally stupid to exchange gold for lead?¹⁴

35 **Pamphagus** But you don't understand. There are veins of gold in sacred lead.

Cocles So it's the same old Pamphagus who returns to us?

Pamphagus No.

Cocles What, then?

Pamphagus A ravenous wolf.¹⁵

40 **Cocles** The luckier ones are those who come back staggering like donkeys under a load of benefices. But why do you prefer a benefice to a wife?¹⁶

Pamphagus Because I like mine ease. An Epicurean life appeals to me.¹⁷

Cocles In my opinion men live more pleasantly if they have a pretty girl at home to make love to whenever they like.

5 **Pamphagus** Yes, and sometimes when they don't like! I prefer a lasting pleasure. The man who marries is happy for a month; the one with a rich benefice enjoys it all his life.

Cocles Solitude is so depressing, though, that even Adam could not have lived happily in paradise unless God had given him Eve.

Pamphagus One who has a fat benefice will not lack an Eve.

10 **Cocles** But pleasure accompanied by ill fame and a bad conscience isn't really pleasure.

Pamphagus True, and therefore I intend to relieve the tedium of solitude by the conversation of books.

Cocles No company is more delightful. But are you going back to your
15 fishing?

Pamphagus I am if I can get some new bait.

Cocles Gold or silver bait?

Pamphagus Either one.

Cocles Don't worry, your father will give it to you.

20 **Pamphagus** There's nobody stingier. He won't trust me again when he learns I lost my money.

Cocles Still, that's how the dice roll.

Pamphagus But dice don't appeal to him.

Cocles If he turns you down, I'll show you where to get as much money as
25 you want.

Pamphagus That sounds fine. Show me! Already my heart jumps for joy.

Cocles It's just at hand.

Pamphagus Have you found a treasure?

Cocles If I had, I would have found it for myself, not you.

30 **Pamphagus** My hopes would revive if I could scrape together a hundred ducats.

Cocles I'll show you where you can get a hundred thousand.

Pamphagus Then why don't you make me happy? Don't torture me any longer. Tell me where.

35 **Cocles** From the *Coin* of Budé.¹⁸ There you may find countless myriads, gold or silver, whichever you prefer.

Pamphagus Away with you and your joke! I'll pay you the money I owe from that source.

Cocles You'll pay back – what I pay out to you from the same source.

40 **Pamphagus** Come, I know you're a jesting fellow.¹⁹

Cocles No joker at all, compared with you.

Pamphagus On the contrary. You're all wit.

Cocles You take a serious matter lightly. In this matter I could be annoyed sooner than amused. This subject is too grave to be taken lightly. If you were in my shoes you wouldn't joke.

- 5 **Pamphagus** You mock me and make fun of me. You treat me jokingly in a matter that's not funny at all.

Cocles I'm not laughing at you; I'm telling the simple truth. I don't joke; I'm telling you straight. I speak seriously, sincerely, plainly. I'm telling the truth.

- 10 **Pamphagus** As surely as you will never stop playing the clown,²⁰ I'll never believe a word you say! – But I'm holding up my journey home to find out the state of affairs there.

Cocles You'll find a good many changes.

Pamphagus I believe you, but I hope I find everything to my liking.

- 15 **Cocles** We may all hope for that, but up to now nobody has had this good fortune.

Pamphagus We'll each take this additional benefit from our roaming: that hereafter home will be sweeter.

Cocles I'm not so sure, because I see some going back for the seventh time.

- 20 If you once get this rash it never stops itching.

NOTES

1 An opening reminiscent of Terence *Phormio* 735. Cf 'The Old Men's Chat' 449:4–5 and 'The Epithalamium' 521:4–5.

2 See 'A Problem' 1060:23–1061:22.

3 Also named in 'The Godly Feast' 176:7–8 and 'The Sober Feast' 925:5. Erasmus remembered the long description in Lucian *Vera historia* 2.5–29. They were the mythical abode of the blessed after death, far to the west of Greece, and sometimes identified with the Canaries. Traditions about them are found as early as Hesiod *Works and Days* 167–73 and Pindar *Olympians* 2.67–73. See Robert R. Cawley *Unpathed Waters* (Princeton 1940) 3–15.

4 Argus; *Odyssey* 17.291–327

5 As Lucian is fond of saying (*Vera historia* 1.3; *Philopseudes* 2). More's translation of *Philopseudes* was printed with other versions of Lucian by him and Erasmus in 1506. On these translations see CWE 24 603:17n and the introduction to these volumes xxviii and n28.

6 *asciverat taurum alium*. Although Penelope was a model of patience and marital fidelity, there are traces of an 'anti-Penelope' tradition (as in Lycophron *Alexandra* 771–3; Lucian *Vera historia* 2.36; Cicero *De natura deorum* 3.22.56). Seneca (*Epistulae morales* 88.8) considers questions such as whether Penelope was virtuous to be frivolous.

7 More accurately, by a scar above his knee (*Odyssey* 19.449–50), but Pamphagus is correct about the rest of the story.

- 8 'Lamia,' anciently a sorceress or hobgoblin invoked to frighten children; Lucian *Philopseudes* 2; Plutarch *Moralia* 515F *De curiositate*, which Erasmus translated (LB IV 70E).
- 9 Doodles by Erasmus in the margins of his *scholia* to Jerome's letters emphasize grotesque noses; see 46 illustration. Some of these drawings are not altogether trivial, for they may be self-caricatures; see E. His 'Selbstkarikaturen des Erasmus' *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Alterstumkunde* 45 (1946) 211–12. Erasmus is credited by William S. Heckscher with having 'produced, as far as we know, the first modern humouristic self-portrait in art ... about seventy-five years before caricatured portraits of identifiable persons were *en vogue*'; see 'Reflections on Seeing Holbein's Portrait of Erasmus at Longford Castle' in *Essays in the History of Art Presented to Rudolf Wittkower* ed Douglas Fraser, Howard Hibbard, and Milton J. Lewine (London 1967) 135–6. Holbein's portraits show that Erasmus had a prominent nose. So did two of his *famuli*, Hilarius Bertholf and Nicolaas Kan (Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 66–7 and 'Cyclops' n15). Since Bertholf apparently entered Erasmus' service only a few months before the March 1522 edition of the *Colloquies* was published, his unusual nose might have inspired the present passage. In the first edition of 'Cyclops,' a mocking description of a man with a long nose embarrassed Erasmus when it was taken as insulting to the Basel ecclesiastic Johannes Oecolampadius; Erasmus then said he had had Kan in mind (Allen Epp 2147:11–20, 2196:81–6). Quinten Metsys' *Le marché* is a study of noses by a painter who knew Erasmus; see Georges Marlier *Erasme et la peinture flamande* (Damme 1954) 226–7 and plate 32. More translated several Greek epigrams on long noses (*Latin Epigrams* 94 and 214 no 212, 47 and 169–70 no 84, 77 and 198–9 no 169).
- 10 So 'The Young Man and the Harlot' 384:29–31. The immorality of Rome and the corruption of the curia were topics as irresistible for sixteenth-century reformers as for their predecessors. 'The nearer to Rome, the worse Christian' ran a proverb quoted by Luther, who was there in 1510 (*An den christlichen Adel* [1520] WA 6 437:6–7 / LW 44 170); similarly, 'At Rome no one bothers about what is right or wrong, only about what is money and what is not' (WA 6 431:9–11 / LW 44 161). All business at Rome is promoted by gifts, favour, and power (Ulrich von Hutten's *Vadiscus*; see Kidd *Documents* 57–8 no 32). Even the *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia* (1537), a program for reform produced by a commission appointed by Pope Paul III, demanded in strong terms the reformation of clerical and prelatical morality in Rome, 'for how can this Holy See set in order and correct the abuses of others if abuses are tolerated in its own principal members?' (Kidd *Documents* 312 no 126 [8]); see Hubert Jedin *A History of the Council of Trent* trans Dom Ernest Graf OSB (Edinburgh and London 1957) I 129–30, 424–33. Erasmus could and did write fulsome flattery of popes and prelates on occasion, but he was better known to his readers, both then and now, for satires of ignorance and corruption, whether at Rome or elsewhere, and ironic scenes of clerical life. On the ruthlessness of lobbying in Rome see *Apologiae contra Stunicam* LB IX 358E–F. He visited Rome in 1509, long after the disappointment of his hopes of going there in 1498 (Allen Ep 75:13–19 / CWE Ep 75:15–22). Unfortunately only one letter seems to have survived (Allen Ep 216 introduction) from this visit, but allusions in later letters afford glimpses of his experience. He was duly impressed by the monuments

and libraries and porticos, the light and freedom, the conversations with learned men and their kindness to him (Allen Ep 333:30–4 /CWE Ep 333:32–6, written in 1515). He writes in 1517 of the city's secular and sacred history, compares it with the Rome of Jerome's time, and hopes it will not become a modern Babylon (Allen Ep 710:45–111 /CWE Ep 710:54–119). Many years later, when protesting against an Italian canon's harsh condemnation of Germans, he recalls (1531) that he himself had heard abominable blasphemy of Christ and the apostles go unrebuked in Rome, and that others had heard it at the papal court even during mass (Allen Ep 2465:470–6). Still later (1535) he remembers witnessing (but not enjoying) a bullfight in St Peter's Square (Allen Ep 3032:417–33). See Preserved Smith *Erasmus: A Study of His Life, Ideals, and Place in History* (New York and London 1923; repr New York 1962) 113, and for a contemporary drawing of a bullfight there in the Jubilee of 1500, Bainton *Erasmus of Christendom* 88.

On Rome in Erasmus' time see A. Renaudet *Erasme et l'Italie* (Geneva 1954); E. Rodocanachi *Rome au temps de Jules II et de Léon X* (Paris 1912) and his *Histoire de Rome: une cour princière au Vatican pendant la Renaissance* (Paris 1925); Peter Partner *Renaissance Rome 1500–1559* (Berkeley 1976); *Rome in the Renaissance: The City and the Myth* ed P.A. Ramsey, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 18 (Binghamton, NY 1982); John F. D'Amico *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome* (Baltimore 1983); Charles L. Stinger *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington 1985).

- 11 A recollection of Diogenes searching with a lantern, in daylight, for an honest man; cf *Apophthegmata* LB IV 178E.
- 12 *parum favit Delia*; see 'Patterns' n59.
- 13 Foolish, as Cocles says, because sometimes the fish carries the hook off when he escapes capture; *Adagia* II ii 60. In another adage Erasmus says hunting a hare with an ox is as foolish as trying in Rome to get a bishopric without using money (IV iv 44).
- 14 Buy bulls and briefs. Papal bulls were sealed with lead.
- 15 *lupus hians*; *Adagia* II iii 58
- 16 'In the colloquy "In Pursuit of Benefices" I reprove those who rush off to Rome to hunt for livings, frequently with serious loss of morals and money both; hence my remark that a priest should entertain himself with good authors instead of a concubine' ('The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1100:20–3). The priests in 'The Well-to-do Beggars' and 'The Funeral' have both benefices and concubines. Reformers, past and present, often complained of this situation, as did Erasmus: priests who though vowed to celibacy keep a concubine 'are Catholic priests, but if they prefer that she be called a wife they are consigned to the fire' (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 100E). It is from Erasmus that we learn that More's distaste for celibacy prevented him from taking holy orders, for he 'chose to be a god-fearing husband rather than an immoral priest' (Allen Ep 999:167 /CWE Ep 999:178–9).
- 17 On what is a truly Epicurean life see 'The Epicurean.' In 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 332:21–34 the Carthusian urges that, as Pamphagus tells Cocles in lines 12–13 here, the tedium of solitude can be relieved by the companionship of books.
- 18 *De asse* (1514), an erudite treatise on ancient coinage by Guillaume Budé, the leading French Hellenist. See CWE 23 xxxviii–xxxix nn75–8. Erasmus admired

Budé's scholarship, though not unreservedly, and praised his Greek and Latin style. They corresponded from 1516 to 1528, sometimes in Greek. This innocent joke in 'Benefices' offended some of Budé's friends (Allen Ep 2046:189–95, and see introductory note to Ep 2021). Budé's sensitivities caused Erasmus some difficulty, but he paid generous tribute to Budé's merits (Allen Ep 2379:406–26). David O. McNeil *Guillaume Budé and French Humanism in the Reign of Francis I* (Geneva 1975) has a chapter on Budé and Erasmus; see also CEBR and the articles and books cited there. A French translation of Budé's correspondence with Erasmus, with introduction and notes, is given by M.-M. de la Garanderie (Paris 1967).

- 19 In the Latin this line and the next are puns on *nasus* 'nose' and *nasutus* 'big-nosed,' 'satirical,' 'witty,' and so recall the earlier jests about Pamphagus' nose.
- 20 *tibi semper stet in capite pileum*. Taken as proverbial by some earlier commentators but not found in *Adagia*

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Militaria

First printed in the March 1522 edition as *Militaria*; in running titles it is called *Confessio militis* or, as in 'The Usefulness of the Colloquies,' *Militis confessio*.

'If you want to see how wicked a thing war is, take a look at the men who wage it,' Erasmus advised in his popular tract *Querela pacis* (1517; LB IV 639D-E / CWE 27 289-322). Another of his books, even more popular, *Enchiridion* (1503), was written to recall a soldier-courtier to piety. In moral essays, homilies, and satirical dialogues, his conception and treatment of the military are invariably severe. 'Soldier,' whether commander or private, in his pages is usually synonymous with reckless, rapacious, and profane adventurer. Worst of all were the Swiss mercenaries and German *Landsknechte*, whom he calls the lowest of human beings (*Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 607E / CWE 27 283). Long residence in Basel gave added occasion for comments, some from personal observation, on the subject. If the Swiss could only rid themselves of this blemish on their reputation, he says, they would be capable of great achievements in the arts (*Adagia* I vi 14; on German mercenaries *Adagia* II vi 23). In skill and valour the Swiss mercenaries were long considered the best infantry soldiers in Europe. Defeat by the French at Marignano (near Milan) in 1515 showed that they were not invincible, but they continued to be recruited by foreign states. War was the Swiss 'national industry,' though some Swiss, including Zwingli, deplored the moral and civil disadvantages of this (Kidd *Documents* 370 no 152, 375, 471 no 233, 558 no 280 [24]). See *New Cambridge Modern History* I *The Renaissance 1493-1520* ed G.R. Potter (Cambridge 1957) 204-8, 356-65 on the part they played in the wars of Erasmus' time; see also John M. Vincent *Switzerland at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century* Johns Hopkins University Studies in History and Political Science 22 no 5 (Baltimore, Md 1904) 11-15, 51-4; and on German *Landsknechte* a strong passage in Sebastian Franck's *Chronicle* (1531; translated by Strauss in *Manifestations of Discontent* 215-18). More's Utopians hire mercenaries for the dirty work of warfare but despise them as brutish creatures, thus satisfying simultaneously the demands of political economy and of self-esteem (Yale CWM 4 *Utopia* 149-51, 207-11, 504-6). More is clearly describing Swiss soldiers, as the marginal gloss (perhaps by Erasmus) indicates; see *Utopia* 206, 280-1 and Surtz *Praise of Wisdom* 294-9. Erasmus shared this contempt but shows the comic as well as the ugly side of the military profession. For war is ridiculous as well as hideous, a truth reflected in literary tradition since classical antiquity.

'Hardly any peace is so unjust that it is not preferable to a war, however just that may be' (*Querela pacis* LB IV 636B-C /CWE 27 310-11). Yet Erasmus, though certainly a pacifist, was not an absolute or total pacifist. He did not regard war as wrong in all circumstance. Wars fought in self-defence when one's country is invaded and survival is at stake are justifiable ('The Soldier and the Carthusian' 333:25-8; *Apologiae contra Stunicam* LB IX 370B-D; *Epistola contra pseudevangelicos* LB X 1584A-B). In *De bello Turcico* (1530) he acknowledged reluctantly that the Turkish threat was actual and had to be resisted. But just wars are rare, he thought; most wars were both wrong and avoidable. See 'A Fish Diet' 687:31-689:18 and 'Charon,' especially n28.

Questions of 'just' war and avoidance or prevention of war are treated in *Institutio principis christiani* (1516), written for the edification of the prince who became Emperor Charles V in 1519, and in two well-known essays that were long read and are still readable, *Querela pacis* and *Adagia* IV i 1: *Dulce bellum inexpertis*. See further Robert P. Adams *The Better Part of Valor* (Seattle 1962) and Craig R. Thompson 'Erasmus as Internationalist and Cosmopolitan' ARG 46 (1955) 167-95.

In addition to all the destruction and human suffering caused by war, the moral degradation of the soldiers who fight in it is a deplorable and depressing evil. This Erasmian theme had long been a commonplace for moralists, but it is also true that for soldiers who fought not for plunder or adventure but to defend their country, Christianity could offer reassurance. 'Do not suppose it is impossible for a soldier to please God,' wrote Augustine (*Letters* 189.4). In the sixteenth century we have, for example, Luther's tractate *Whether Soldiers Too Can be Saved* (WA 19 623-62 /LW 46 93-137); they can. But of virtuous or pious soldiers Erasmus has little to say. The warriors in his pages fight, as in this dialogue Thrasymachus does, for bad reasons. Like many others met in dramatic and satirical literature of the sixteenth century, they have their place in a literary tradition going back to the Thrasos of classical comedy. Yet these swaggering, shallow, though sometimes amusing or witty characters are not mere stock figures out of Menander or Plautus or Terence. They are surely drawn from contemporary life as well as from convention or imagination. Some of the comic scenes and lines in *1 Henry IV* and *Henry V* lead us to wonder whether Shakespeare had not read and remembered 'Military Affairs.' Possibly, but there is no proof.

As sardonic comment on the pomp and circumstance of glorious war, this colloquy anticipates 'The Soldier and the Carthusian,' 'The Funeral,' and 'Cyclops.' To these may be added parts of *Moriae encomium*, 'Charon,' and *Julius exclusus*. The consensus of scholars who have studied the matter is that Erasmus wrote *Julius exclusus*, but this question is not closed. That he was deeply implicated is almost certain; that he was the sole author is not. Adroitly,

and with evident anxiety, he disclaimed all responsibility for publication of the dialogue, yet without absolutely denying that he had anything to do with its composition (see Allen Ep 636:12–22 / CWE Ep 636:14–25). Whether and to what degree he is disingenuous in such assertions depends on interpretation of the circumstantial evidence. For a good summary of the subject see Bainton *Erasmus of Christendom* 109; for other studies, Ferguson's introduction to his edition in *Erasmi opuscula* 38–54; J.K. Sowards' in *The 'Julius Exclusus' of Erasmus* trans Paul Pascal ed J.K. Sowards (Bloomington and London 1968) 8–14; and Michael J. Heath's in CWE 27 156–60; see also 'The Old Men's Chat' n79. *Julius exclusus* is Erasmian in conception, manner, and style; as for the authorship, *aut Erasmi aut diaboli*. 'Military Affairs' shows a close affinity to it; both are sharply rendered attacks on war and the violence engendered by greed.

HANNO, THRASYMACHUS¹

- Hanno** How is it you come back to us a Vulcan when you left here a
 5 Mercury?
Thrasymachus What Vulcans or Mercuries are you talking about?²
Hanno You left as though wing-footed; now you're limping.³
Thrasymachus The usual way to come back from war.
Hanno What have you to do with war? You're more timid than any deer.
 10 **Thrasymachus** Hope of booty made me brave.
Hanno Then you come back rich with plunder?
Thrasymachus No, with an empty money-belt.⁴
Hanno So much the less luggage to weigh you down!
Thrasymachus But I return laden with sins.⁵
 15 **Hanno** A heavy burden indeed, if the prophet speaks truth when he calls
 sin lead.⁶
Thrasymachus I saw and did more wickedness there than ever before in
 my whole life.
Hanno Has a soldier's life any attraction at all?
 20 **Thrasymachus** Nothing's more wicked or more ruinous.
Hanno Then what possesses those men – some hired for pay, others for
 nothing – who run off to war as if they were going to a party?
Thrasymachus I can only suppose they're driven by devils and have given
 themselves over wholly to an evil spirit and to misery in such a way as to go
 25 to hell before their time.
Hanno Apparently, since they can scarcely be hired at any price for honest
 purposes. But tell me how the battle was fought, and which side won.

Thrasymachus So great was the tumult and the shouting, blasts of trumpets, thunder of horns, neighing of horses, and clamour of men that I couldn't see what was going on; I scarcely knew where I was myself.⁷

5 **Hanno** Then why do others who come back from war describe every detail – what each man did or said – as if they had been neutral observers who missed nothing?

Thrasymachus For my part I think they're glorious liars.⁸ What went on in my own tent, I know; as to what happened in the battle, I'm completely ignorant.

10 **Hanno** Well, do you know how you got this lameness?

Thrasymachus May Mars curse me from this day forth⁹ if I know for sure. I think my knee was hurt by a stone or a horse's hoof.

Hanno But I do know.

Thrasymachus You know? Did someone tell you?

15 **Hanno** No, but I can guess.

Thrasymachus Tell me, then.

Hanno When you were in a fright and running away you fell down and knocked it against a stone.

20 **Thrasymachus** Damned if you haven't hit the nail on the head!¹⁰ You've guessed right.

Hanno Go home and tell your wife about your victories.

Thrasymachus A sour song of victory she'll sing me for coming home empty-handed.¹¹

Hanno But how will you make good what you've taken as plunder?¹²

25 **Thrasymachus** I made it good long ago.

Hanno To whom?

Thrasymachus Whores, wine merchants, and men who beat me at dice.¹³

Hanno The old army spirit! It's fitting that ill-gotten gains should be lost in a worse way. But you did refrain from sacrilege, I suppose?

30 **Thrasymachus** Not at all. Nothing was sacred there,¹⁴ nothing spared, sacred or profane.

Hanno How will you make amends for that?

Thrasymachus They say you don't have to make amends for what's done in war; whatever it is, it's right.¹⁵

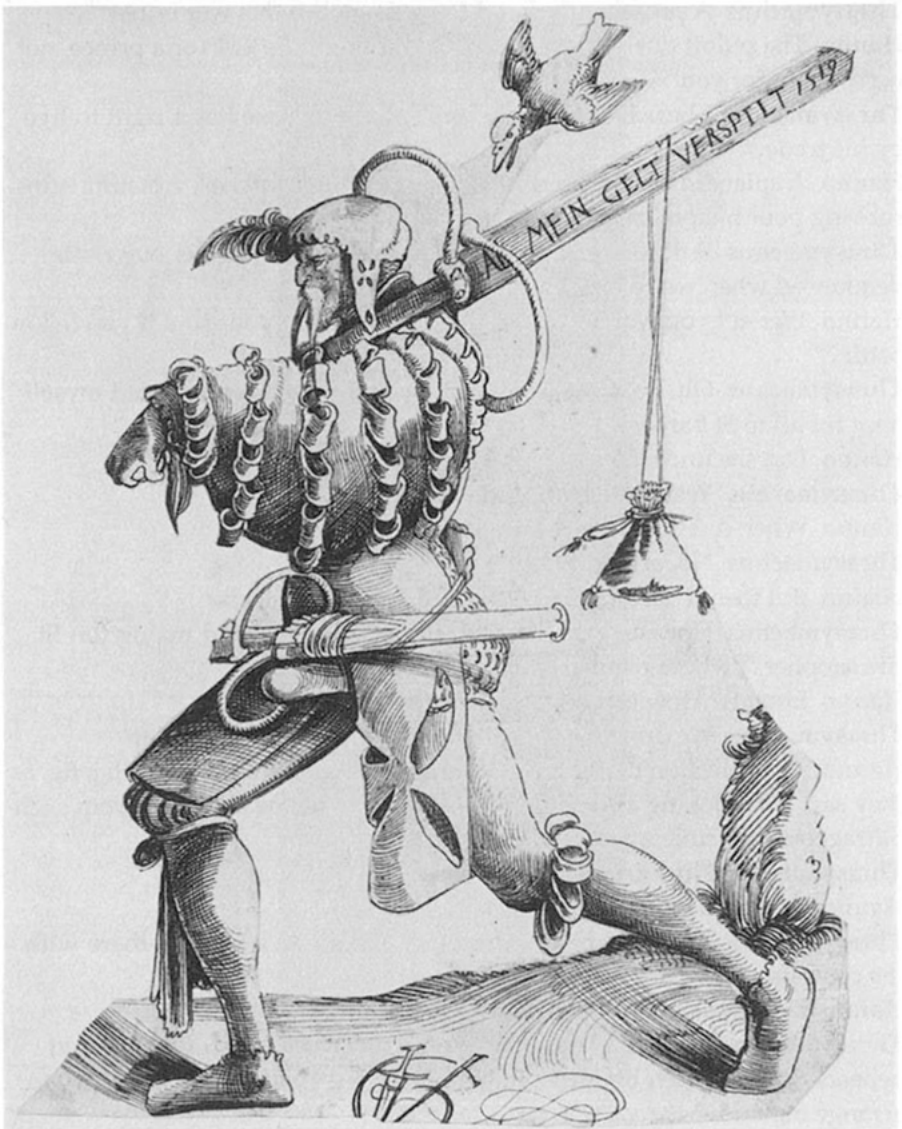
35 **Hanno** The law of war, perhaps.

Thrasymachus Exactly.

Hanno Yet that law is the greatest wrong. It wasn't devotion to your country but hope of spoils that drew you to war.

40 **Thrasymachus** Granted – and in my opinion few men go there from any loftier motive.

Hanno To be mad with the many is something!



Return of the mercenary

Urs Graf, 1519

This swaggering adventurer, down on his luck
(even the raven, a symbol of avarice, mocks him),
has congenial colleagues in other colloquies.

Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kupferstichkabinett

Thrasymachus A preacher declared from the pulpit that war is just.¹⁶

Hanno The pulpit doesn't often lie. But war might be just for a prince, not necessarily for you.

5 **Thrasymachus** I heard from professors¹⁷ that everyone has a right to live by his trade.¹⁸

Hanno A splendid trade – burning houses, looting churches, violating nuns, robbing poor people, murdering the innocent!¹⁹

Thrasymachus Butchers are paid to slaughter beef. Why is our trade denounced when we're hired to slaughter men?

10 **Hanno** Weren't you worried about the destination of your soul if you fell in battle?²⁰

Thrasymachus Oh, no, I was confident, because I had commended myself once for all to St Barbara.

Hanno Did she undertake to protect you?

15 **Thrasymachus** Yes, she seemed to nod her head a little.²¹

Hanno When did this happen – in the morning?

Thrasymachus No, after dinner.

Hanno But then, I dare say, even the trees seemed to walk.

20 **Thrasymachus** How he guesses everything! – But I relied mainly on St Christopher,²² whose picture I looked at every day.

Hanno In tents? How came saints to be there?

Thrasymachus We drew a charcoal picture of him on the tent-flap.

25 **Hanno** As protection that charcoal Christopher surely wasn't worth a fig, as they say.²³ But, joking aside, I don't see how you can be absolved from such outrageous sins unless you betake yourself to Rome.

Thrasymachus No, I know a shorter way.

Hanno What is it?

Thrasymachus I'll go to the Dominicans²⁴ and strike a bargain there with the commissaries.²⁵

30 **Hanno** Even for sacrilege?

Thrasymachus Even if I had robbed Christ himself, yes even if I had beheaded him,²⁶ such liberal indulgences have they and such authority to arrange matters.

Hanno Very well – if God endorses your arrangement.

35 **Thrasymachus** What I'm more afraid of is that the devil may not agree to it. God is forgiving by nature.

Hanno What priest will you choose?

Thrasymachus One I know to be as shameless and easygoing as possible.²⁷

40 **Hanno** To be sure of finding like for like!²⁸ When you're absolved you'll go straight from him to communion?



St Barbara with the pyx
Lucas Cranach the Elder (d 1553)

When she refused to renounce Christianity, the legendary Barbara was put to death by her father. He was instantly killed by lightning. The pyx here is a symbol of Barbara's devotion to her religion, but she was remembered chiefly for the bolt of lightning and crash of thunder that accompanied her father's punishment.

Hence she became the patron saint of gunners and miners.

Dresdener Galerie
Photo Fratelli Alinari

Thrasymachus Of course. After I once dump the dregs of my sins into his cowl, I'll be free of the burden; let him who absolves me see to that.

Hanno How do you know he absolves you?

Thrasymachus I know.

5 **Hanno** By what token?

Thrasymachus Because²⁹ he places his hand on my head, mumbling something or other.

Hanno What if³⁰ he restores all your sins to you when laying his hand upon you, muttering these words: 'I absolve you of all good deeds³¹ (of which I
10 find none in you) and I restore your character to you and send you away just as I received you'?

Thrasymachus Let him look to what he says. Enough for me that I believe myself absolved.

Hanno But to believe that is risky. It may not satisfy God, to whom you're
15 in debt.

Thrasymachus How did I happen to run into you? You'd change my conscience from clear to cloudy.

Hanno A lucky accident. It's a good sign³² if a friend you chance to meet gives you a timely warning.

20 **Thrasymachus** I don't know³³ how good it is, but it's certainly disagreeable.

NOTES

- 1 Hanno was the name of a Carthaginian commander in the first Punic war (264 bc). Thrasymachus (spelled Trasymachus in the 1522 and other early editions) is the expounder of the 'might is right' argument in Plato *Republic* 1.336B–354C.
- 2 Vulcan, the fire-god, is doubly appropriate here because he was the maker of thunderbolts and was lame. The winged Mercury, swiftest of gods, was the god of travellers.
- 3 Writing from Basel in 1515, Erasmus says of Swiss mercenaries returning from the battle of Marignano that they were *laceri, mutili, saucii* 'cragged, maimed, and wounded' (Allen Ep 360:8 / CWE Ep 360:9–10). When giving advice on proper carriage in *De civilitate* (1530) he remarks that 'we should leave the foolish semihalting gait to Swiss soldiers' (LB I 1036E / CWE 25 278). Cf 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 334:41–335:2 and 'A Marriage in Name Only' 845:23–4.
- 4 *Adagia* I v 16. Mercenaries fought by contract, solely for money, without concern for the political or other pursuits of those who hired them. They were 'greedy, pitiless, cruel, brave but roisteringly self-indulgent, drawn from the dregs of a society against whose restraints they revenged themselves through theft, rape, pillage, and intimidation' (J.R. Hale *War and Society in Renaissance*

- Europe, 1450–1620* [London 1985; repr Baltimore 1986] 147. This is an essential book for anyone interested in the political, social, and economic aspects of warfare in early modern Europe. On mercenaries in particular see Hale 69–73, 146–52).
- 5 Like the soldier in 'The Soldier and the Carthusian'
 - 6 Ezek 22:18, 20; Zech 5:7, 8. Sinful lives and empty purses are characteristic in Erasmus' descriptions of soldiers. Only generals grow rich (see 'The Funeral' 770:24–41).
 - 7 With this description of the hurly-burly of battle compare a passage in *Dulce bellum inexpertis*, the most eloquent of Erasmus' evocations of the nature of war (*Adagia* IV i 1 LB II 953A–C / Phillips 'Adages' 313).
 - 8 An echo of Horace *Odes* 3.11.35. Cf Tolstoy *War and Peace* part 9, chapter 12 (trans Constance Garnett): 'Men always lie when they describe deeds of battle ... everything in battle happens utterly differently from our imagination and description of it.'
 - 9 Mars was the god of war.
 - 10 *rem acu tetigisti* (Plautus *Rudens* 1306), a favourite proverb with Erasmus (*Adagia* II iv 93)
 - 11 'Requiem rather than rejoicing is the order of the day,' Erasmus remarks in the letter cited in n3 above (Allen Ep 360:9 / CWE Ep 360:10–11).
 - 12 In *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* Erasmus tells of a general who advised his troops to plunder everyone, friend and foe alike. If the campaign succeeded they could all keep their loot; if it failed they would at least have enjoyed some of the booty before having to return the rest (LB VI 241F). Licence to plunder was a substitute for soldiers' pay (see Allen Ep 2285:75–7).
 - 13 Standard sources of dissipation for the military as attested in literature since classical antiquity. See 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 334:10–11.
 - 14 *Adagia* I viii 37
 - 15 'As "the sea washes away all the sins of mankind," so war covers over the dregs of every crime' ('The Knight without a Horse' 887:13–14).
 - 16 Erasmus is unsparing in denunciations of warmongering by ecclesiastics (including popes) or with their connivance, a fault more prevalent, he says, among 'modern' than earlier churchmen (*Adagia* IV i 1 LB 963E–F, 964C–E). On this and related topics see introduction to this colloquy, notes to 'Charon,' and for additional references Craig R. Thompson 'Erasmus as Internationalist and Cosmopolitan' (see introduction 54 above).
 - 17 *rabinis* 'masters.' Erasmus at times uses this Hebraic word ironically of academic masters and doctors (as in *Adagia* IV i 1: *Dulce bellum inexpertis* LB II 963E; see also, in the *Colloquies*, 'A Fish Diet' n189), some of whom were resentful. He defends himself in *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1090A–B.
 - 18 'Tis no sin for a man to labour in his vocation' (1 *Henry IV* 1.2.116). Erasmus was fond of this truism; see *Adagia* I vii 33, where he is careful to add that the profession must be honourable.
 - 19 An obligatory theme in sixteenth-century writings on war. The *Instructions sur le fait de la guerre* by Raymond de Fourquevaux (1548), long a standard treatise, deplores the rapes, murders, and pillage committed by French soldiers; see G. Dickinson's edition (London 1954) lxviii–lxxx, 100–7. On rape of nuns see *Apophthegmata* LB IV 240D.

- 20 Cf 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 335:12–18. The *locus classicus* is Bates' assertion in Shakespeare's *Henry v* 4.1.138–9: 'If his cause be wrong, our obedience to the King wipes the crime of it out of us.'
- 21 Barbara was patroness of fortifications, makers of armaments, and artillerymen. Since she was long invoked against fire and thunderstorms, her later distinction as the favourite saint of gunners is easily explained. On the earlier form of her legend see A.J. Denomy 'An Old French Life of St Barbara' *Mediaeval Studies* 1 (1939) 148–78. Scarcely anything is known of her life, but her legend has a life of its own.
- Only in the early years of the sixteenth century did cannon become really effective in battle. On this and related subjects see J.R. Hale 'Gunpowder and the Renaissance' in *From the Renaissance to the Counter-Reformation* ed Charles H. Carter (New York 1965) 113–44. In Allen Ep 1756:84–92 Erasmus has some melancholy reflections on the unfortunate invention of cannon: 'As our humanity declines, our barbarity increases.' He notes the custom of carving images of saints on cannon (*Querela pacis* LB IV 640F / ASD IV-2 96:832–5 / CWE 27 319). The papal army of Pius II had cannon named after himself and his mother (*Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope* trans Florence A. Gragg, ed Leona C. Gabel [New York 1959; repr 1962] 187). Each of the twelve unusually large cannon of Henry VIII's army in France in the summer of 1513 was cast with the image of an apostle (John Taylor's diary, quoted in LP I part 2 no 2391 page 1058). In one of his numerous defences against the charge of scoffing at the veneration of saints, Erasmus says it is superstition, not veneration, for a soldier bent upon plunder to invoke the protection of St Barbara (Allen Ep 2443:202–6). Not only gunners but their intended victims appealed to Barbara (J.R. Hale 'War and Public Opinion in Renaissance Italy' in *Italian Renaissance Studies* ed E.F. Jacob [London 1960] 102). This was the sort of paradox that Erasmus enjoyed satirizing.
- For other examples of images of saints 'nodding' see 'A Pilgrimage' n10.
- 22 Patron of travellers, and like Barbara and George a popular 'auxiliary saint.' See 'The Shipwreck' 355:38–356:7.
- 23 *Adagia* I vii 85
- 24 A reminder of the prominence of this order in the controversy over indulgences at the beginning of Luther's public career. Johann Tetzel, the sub-commissary for the cardinal-archbishop of Mainz, Albert of Brandenburg, in the campaign to sell indulgences in the province of Mainz and Magdeburg (1517), was a Dominican. Cajetan (Tommaso de Vio), who as papal legate had a long but futile interview with Luther in Augsburg in October 1518, was general of the order. Erasmus charged the Dominicans with the main responsibility for the 'Lutherana tempestas' (Allen Ep 1875:138–41; see 'Rash Vows' n20). Though he allowed that every order had good members, and was unwilling to condemn a group or class *in toto*, he often had occasion to write severely of Dominicans. His dislike was due partly to their activity in the persecution of Reuchlin (see 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin'), which dragged on until 1520 and later, and increasingly to their attacks on himself. One of them, Vincentius Theoderici, is satirized in the colloquy 'The Funeral.' On a Dominican scandal in Bern in 1507–9 see 'The Seraphic Funeral' 1007:10–11 and n51. For a summary of Erasmus' relations with the Dominicans see Allen Ep 1006:4n.

- 25 Commissioners or agents of a bishop in districts of his diocese
- 26 Startling but not unparalleled language; see for example the seventy-fifth of Luther's Ninety-five Theses of 1517 (Kidd *Documents* 25 no 11). Inspection of Albert of Brandenburg's instructions to Tetzl concerning the sale of indulgences (Kidd *Documents* 13–17 no 6) suggests why such characters as Thrasymachus are confident that they will find 'liberal indulgences.' For an example in the *Colloquies* see 'A Pilgrimage' 635:25–636:3.
- On indulgences for soldiers see *Julius exclusus* in Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 78:252–7 /Pascal and Sowards *Julius* (55 above) 54–5 /CWE 27 174; on the growth of the indulgence system *Ecclesiastes* LB v 942B–C and Allen Ep 2285:86–105. References to this subject, far too numerous for inclusion here, are scattered throughout Erasmus' writings and letters, especially those earlier than 1525. He insisted, as he always did when accused of subverting the church's teachings, that he attacked corruptions and gross superstitions, not the doctrine itself – provided, he would add, that the doctrine in question was indisputably authoritative and not merely an unsound tradition or a scholastic theory: 'Nowhere do I condemn indulgences, although I have always detested those supremely shameless hawkers of them' (*Spongia* LB x 1654D; and see an important statement in *Exomologesis* LB v 167D–F).
- 27 In its examination and censure of the *Colloquies* (1526), the Paris faculty of theology denounced this question and answer as irreverent mockery of sacramental confession. Erasmus replied that on the contrary he mocked the impiety and impudence of the soldier who puts his trust in confession without repenting his sins and amending his conduct; see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* (1532) LB ix 931B–932A; Allen Ep 2037:29–34. On choosing a proper confessor see 'Youth' 97:16–35.
- 28 *Adagia* i x 71: *Similes habent labra lactucas* 'Like lips like lettuce' (of a donkey eating thistles), proverbial for two things or creatures well matched
- 29 In a rare and spurious edition of the *Colloquies* of c 1525 (no place, date, or publisher announced) the lines from here to the end were rewritten and shortened to make them sound meek and reverent. (BE 2nd series *Colloquia* i 145–6). Probably the culprit was Campester, on whom see 'Patterns' n71.
- 30 Lines 8–11 were attacked by Alberto Pio, prince of Carpi, as scoffing at confession; Erasmus replied in *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* (1531) LB ix 1190E–F. Alberto Pio, nephew of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, was an unwearied critic of Erasmus, who took the trouble to answer him at length (LB ix 1123–96). In addition to the *Apologia*, Erasmus had written *Responsio ad Pium* (1529) LB ix 1095A–1122E. On Alberto Pio see further the introduction to 'The Seraphic Funeral' 996–9.
- 31 See 'The Master's Bidding' n11.
- 32 *bona avis* 'a lucky bird'; *Adagia* i i 75
- 33 I don't know . . . disagreeable.] Added in the July–August 1522 edition

THE MASTER'S BIDDING

Herilia

First printed in the March 1522 edition.

'Rabinus' here denotes simply 'master,' but see 'Military Affairs' n17. Syrus is the name of a slave in Terence *Adelphi* and *Heautontimorumenos*.

While some of the commands and responses in this colloquy are authentic excerpts from sixteenth-century daily life, they are likewise stock lines for master and servant in other periods of social history, echoed in phrase books for schools, manuals of courtesy, and treatises on household management. See for example the collection of late medieval English precepts on domestic service in *The Babees Book* ed F.J. Furnivall EETS original series 32 (London 1868); 2nd ed entitled *Early English Meals and Manners* (London 1931; repr Detroit 1969).

Erasmus' letters provide many glimpses of the life and activities of his servant-pupils, though we know he was more considerate and less peremptory than the master in this colloquy. Next to the letters the best commentary on this is a work by one of those *famuli*: *Οἰκέρης sive de officiis famulorum* (1535) by Gilbert Cousin (Cognatus). Part of that text is reprinted in the book by Bierlaire mentioned below; an English translation by Thomas Chaloner (better known for his 1545 translation of *Moriae encomium*) appeared in 1543. Cousin (1506–72) was in Erasmus' service from 1529 or 1530 to 1535. For this reason his book, issued while Erasmus was still living, has unusual interest. There can be no doubt that its sketch of servants' duties reflects Cousin's own observations and experience in the household of the great man. A charming woodcut (1530) of Erasmus and Gilbert Cousin seated at the table, the master dictating, is reproduced with Ep 2381 in Allen. Cousin is a speaker in the colloquy 'Penny-Pinching.' He became a person of consequence after leaving Erasmus' service and was the author of many devotional and scholarly works. See Allen Ep 2381 introduction and CEBR.

Erasmus had a long succession of servant-pupils, who acted as secretaries and messengers. They were not mere servants; some at any rate were promising pupils from good families. In return for domestic services they received instruction in reading and speaking Latin and training as copyists, and they often read to Erasmus. The satisfactory ones apparently prized the advantages of living in the household of an eminent scholar. A few became men of reputation in later life. Cousin was one; Karl Harst, who later attended Anne of Cleves to England, was another. Quirinus Talesius (see 'Knucklebones' n2) became burgomaster of Haarlem. Jan (II) Łaski,

prominent in the annals of the Reformation, purchased Erasmus' library, which Erasmus retained while he lived; it then went to Łaski in Poland (see Husner). Strictly speaking, however, Łaski was a *convictor*, a paying guest, rather than a *puer* or *famulus*, in Erasmus' establishment.

These *famuli* frequently appear in Erasmus' correspondence. On them see Allen's essay 'Erasmus' Servant-Pupils' (*Lectures* 88–108) and a careful monograph by Franz Bierlaire, *La familia d'Erasmus: contribution à l'histoire de l'humanisme* (Paris 1968), which distinguishes *puer*, *famulus*, *minister*, and *convictor* (all four terms are used in a few lines of Allen Ep 2236:7–11). The first three terms mean 'servant' but have important nuances. In Erasmian context *puer* implies a youth from twelve to sixteen who is both pupil and occasional servant, whereas *famuli* 'servants,' although they might be students, were paid a regular stipend for working. This circumstance, and the fact that they were usually older than *pueri*, seem to identify them. Cousin, who was invaluable, had been a university student for several years before becoming a *famulus*; see P.-A. Pidoux de Maduère *Un humaniste comtois: Gilbert Cousin* (1910; repr Geneva 1970). He and other competent *famuli* may be thought of as essentially secretaries, sufficiently educated for such duties but available for whatever else Erasmus required. By contrast, the youth in *Herilia* is a lazy sort who devotes whatever time he can spare from sleep or idleness to the neglect of his menial duties, which in these scenes are those of a houseboy.

If the *Colloquia* had any influence on sixteenth-century picaresque fiction or 'rogue literature,' as is likely, this dialogue would be one example. Some pages in *Lazarillo de Tormes* chapter 3 (printed c 1554) recall it. See Bataillon *Erasmus et l'Espagne* 652–5.

RABINUS,¹ SYRUS

Rabinus Hey there, you rascal!² I'm hoarse from shouting so long, yet you're still snoring; you seem to sleep like a dormouse.³ Get up at once or
 5 I'll rouse you with a beating. When will you finish sleeping off yesterday's boozing?⁴ Aren't you ashamed to be snoring until broad daylight, you lazy lout?⁵ Proper servants⁶ are up before dawn to see that when the master rises he'll find everything in order. – How hard to get this cuckoo out of his warm nest! The whole day goes by as he scratches his head, stretching, and
 10 yawning.

Syrus It's scarcely daylight yet.

Rabinus No doubt, since to your eyes it's still the dead of night. It's still the early hours of the night.

Syrus What are your orders?

Rabinus Stir up the fire,⁷ brush my cap and cloak, clean my shoes and sandals. Turn my hose inside out and clean them first on the inside, then on the outside. Next fumigate the place. Light a lamp. Get me a clean undershirt and⁸ dry the wash before a clear fire.

5 **Syrus** Yes, sir.

Rabinus But get a move on. This should have been done already.

Syrus I'm moving.

Rabinus I see, but you don't make any progress. You're as slow as a tortoise.⁹

10 **Syrus** I can't do two things at once.¹⁰

Rabinus So you're a wiseacre too, you rascal? Take the chamber-pot away, make the bed, draw back the curtains. Sweep the hall floor, sweep the bedroom floor. Bring me some water to wash my hands with. What are you stopping for, stupid? It'll take you a year to light the candle.

15 **Syrus** I can hardly find a spark of fire.

Rabinus That's how you banked it yesterday.

Syrus I've no bellows.

Rabinus How the fool talks back! As if anyone who had you needed bellows!

20 **Syrus** What an imperious master I have! Ten ready servants could hardly carry out orders to suit him.

Rabinus What's that you say, you loafer?

Syrus Nothing at all. I'm looking after everything.

Rabinus Didn't I hear you muttering?

25 **Syrus** Just saying my prayers.

Rabinus Quite likely: the Paternoster backwards.¹¹ What are you growling about imperiousness?

Syrus Just praying you might become emperor.

Rabinus And I pray that you may become a man instead of a blockhead.

30 Attend me to church; then return home promptly and make the beds. Put everything that's out of place where it belongs. See that the entire house is spick and span. Scour the chamber-pot. Put everything dirty out of sight. Some gentlemen may come to see me. If I find anything amiss, you'll get a hell of a beating.

35 **Syrus** I'm well acquainted with your loving-kindness.

Rabinus Look out, then, if you know what's good for you.

Syrus But not a word about lunch so far.

Rabinus Oh, how the wretch keeps his mind on this! I'm not having lunch at home, so come here about ten o'clock to attend me to the place where I'm

40 going for lunch.¹²

Syrus Yes, your arrangements are made, but in the meantime there's nothing here for me to eat.

Rabinus If there's nothing for you to eat, there's something you can hunger for.

5 **Syrus** Nobody gets filled by being hungry.

Rabinus There's bread.

Syrus Yes, but black and just like bran.

Rabinus Fastidious fellow! If given the food you deserve, you'd have to eat hay. Or do you want me to fill an ass like you only with cakes? If

10 you're finicky about eating bread by itself,¹³ add a leek, or an onion if you prefer.

Another

Rabinus You must go to the market-place.

15 **Syrus** So far?

Rabinus Only half a dozen steps, but to a dawdler like you it's two miles. I'll take your laziness into account: on the same trip you shall do many errands. Count them on your fingers to remember them. First, go round by the tailor's and get my pleated doublet¹⁴ from him if it's finished. Next look
20 for Cornelius the carrier – he's often tippling at the Hart – and ask if he has a letter for me and on what day he leaves. Then go to the draper and tell him from me that he's not to worry because I haven't sent his money on the day appointed; it will be paid to him within a few days.

Syrus When – at the Greek Calends?¹⁵

25 **Rabinus** You laugh, reprobate. No, before the first of March. On your way home turn to the left and inquire of the booksellers whether any new books are in from Germany.¹⁶ Find out what they are and how much they cost. After that, request Goclenius¹⁷ to do me the honour of coming to dinner; otherwise I must dine by myself.

30 **Syrus** You even invite guests? You haven't enough at home to feed a mouse.

Rabinus After you see to the other things, go to the butcher's and buy me a shoulder of mutton; make sure it's roasted nicely. Do you hear these orders?

Syrus More orders than I could wish.

Rabinus But see that you remember.

35 **Syrus** I'll hardly be able to remember half of them.

Rabinus Still standing here, idler? You should have returned already.

Syrus What single person could do so many things? I attend him when he goes out; I attend him home. I'm at his command with broom and chamber-pot; I wait on him hand and foot, look after cups, books, accounts, quarrels, run

40 errands. To cap it all, I don't seem busy to him unless I'm cook too!

Another

Rabinus Fetch my gaiters; I must go riding.

Syrus Here they are.

Rabinus You've taken care of them nicely: they're white with mould! I dare
5 say you haven't polished or greased them this year, they're so brittle. Shine
them with a damp cloth; then grease them carefully before the fire and work
them until they're soft.

Syrus I'll look after it.

Rabinus Where are my spurs?

10 **Syrus** They're here.

Rabinus Yes, but covered with rust. Where's the bridle and saddle?

Syrus Here in a moment.

Rabinus See that nothing is missing or broken, or likely to break soon, so
there will be no delay when I'm on my way. Hurry to the saddler and have
15 this strap mended. On your return examine the horse's shoes for loose or
missing nails. How thin and scraggy the horses are! How often do you rub
them down or comb them in a year?

Syrus Why, every day.

Rabinus No doubt. The question answers itself.¹⁸ Sometimes they're unfed
20 for three whole days, I imagine.

Syrus Not at all.

Rabinus You deny it, of course, but the horses would tell a different tale
if they could talk – though by their very leanness they speak eloquently
enough.

25 **Syrus** I look after them diligently.

Rabinus Then why are you fatter than they are?

Syrus Because I don't feed on hay.

Rabinus One thing remains to be done: get my bag ready quickly.

Syrus Yes, sir.

NOTES

1 Rabinus] 'Rabinus' in early editions

2 *furcifer* 'yoke-bearer,' an abusive term for slaves in Plautus and Terence

3 *Adagia* prolegomena 13 LB II 12F; Martial 13.59

4 A memory of Plautus *Mostellaria* 1122, *Rudens* 586

5 *somnium hominis*; also at 'Marriage' 311:22. See *De conscribendis epistolis* LB I
357D / ASD I-2 245:5–8, and cf Terence *Adelphi* 396; *Adagia* II i 62.

6 *famuli*. See introduction 64–5 above.

7 Cousin says the first test of a prospective servant is to have him make a fire.
This colloquy illustrates also the importance of Cousin's remark in the same
passage that 'magna pars officiorum est bona voluntas' (*Opera* [1562] I 220 /

Bierlaire *Familia* [introduction 65 above] 23, 26).

- 8 and . . . fire] Added in the September 1531 edition
- 9 *Adagia* I viii 84. On promptness as a virtue in servants, see Cousin *Opera* I 221 /Bierlaire *Familia* 27–8.
- 10 Literally 'I can't drink and whistle at the same time'; *Adagia* II ii 80, from Plautus *Mostellaria* 791
- 11 Cf *Adagia* v i 30. Here *praepostere* means 'hypocritically' or 'irreverently' – uttering good words to a bad purpose, as illustrated in one of Bishop Stephen Gardiner's sermons (1540): 'Now the devill teacheth, come backe from fastynge, come backe from praying, come backe from confession, come back from wepinge for thy synnes, and all is backwarde, in so much as he must lerne to say his Pater Noster backward, and where we sayd, "forgive us our debtes, as we forgyve our debtors," now it is, "as thou forgivest our debtes, so I will forgyve my debtors," and so God must forgyve fyrst; and al, I sayd, is turned backwarde' (*Letters* 169). As a boy Gardiner had been *famulus* or *puer* to an Englishman named Eden and in this capacity had met Erasmus in Paris c 1511, as he reminded Erasmus in 1526 (Epp 1669, 1745).
- 12 On *prandium* as 'lunch,' see 'The Godly Feast' 176:21–2 and n15. Ten was a common hour for the principal meal of the day.
- 13 Without fish or fruit (*citra obsonium*)
- 14 *thoracem undulatum*. The phrase gave trouble to readers even in Erasmus' day; see Franz Bierlaire 'Erasmus expliqué par Hegendorf' *Quaerendo* 2 (1972) 210.
- 15 Never, since there were no Greek Calends; *Adagia* I v 84.
- 16 Perhaps from the Frankfurt fair, the largest event of its kind in the international book trade
- 17 Conradus Goclenius (d 1539) was a professor of Latin at the Collegium Trilingue in Louvain, an institution in which Erasmus had a strong interest; see 'Patterns' n31 and 'The Epithalamium' 523:1–26 and especially n19. Common concerns, zeal for learning, and mutual esteem cemented a long friendship between Erasmus and Goclenius. The final extant letter written by Erasmus, dated 28 June 1536, was addressed to Goclenius. See CEBR.
- 18 Terence *Andria* 202

A LESSON IN MANNERS

Monitoria paedagogica

First printed in the March 1522 edition as *Monitoria*; in some editions called *Monita paedagogica*.

This brief lesson in civility, like the preceding dialogue between master and servant, contains traditional material; many of the admonitions about decency and polite behaviour are as old as Clement of Alexandria's *Paedagogus* book 2 and no doubt much older. In this colloquy, Erasmus says, 'I teach a boy modesty and manners suitable to his age' ('The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1100:26-7). We are not told the boy's age – ten or thereabouts, probably.

The advice given here is repeated and elaborated in Erasmus' popular manual *De civilitate* (1530) LB I 1033A-1044B. Addressed to Henry of Burgundy, the ten-year-old son of Adolph of Veere, to whom Erasmus had dedicated an *Oratio de virtute amplectenda* in 1503 (LB v 65D-72D /CWE 29 1-13), it was often reprinted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and translated into half a dozen languages. The English version by Robert Whittinton (or Whittington), *A Little Book of Good Manners for Children* (1532), was printed at least six times by 1560, and in that same year another translation, by Thomas Paynell, was issued; see Devereux. One of the standard seventeenth-century English books on secondary education, Charles Hoole's *A new Discovery of the old art of teaching schoole* (1660) recommends *De civilitate* as an authority. For a good modern translation by Brian McGregor see CWE 25 273-89.

Material on deportment for the young can be found in Gilbert Cousin's short treatise on *famuli*, in *The Babees Book* (on both of these see the introduction to the preceding colloquy), and in *Queen Elizabeth's Academy* ed F.J. Furnivall EETS extra series 8 (London 1869). In the voluminous 'courtesy literature' of Erasmus' age the *Galateo* of Giovanni della Casa is perhaps the best book with which to compare Erasmus' *De civilitate*, though *Galateo* is much longer. For guides to Renaissance manners and courtesy books see T.F. Crane *Italian Social Customs of the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven 1920); Ruth Kelso *The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century* (Urbana 1929); William L. Wiley *The Gentleman of Renaissance France* (Cambridge, Mass 1954). On *De civilitate* see Franz Bierlaire 'Erasmus at School: The *De civilitate Morum Puerilium Libellus*' in *Essays on the Works of Erasmus* ed R.L. DeMolen (New Haven and London 1978) 239-51.

MASTER, BOY

Master You seem to me to have been born not in a hall but a stall,¹ so crude are your manners. A respectable boy ought to have decent manners.²

5 **Whenever** one of your betters addresses you, stand up straight and uncover your head. Your countenance should be neither sad nor gloomy nor saucy nor insolent nor changeable but controlled by a cheerful modesty; your gaze respectful, always looking at the person you're speaking to; your feet together; hands still. Don't shift from one foot to the other or gesticulate with
10 your hands or bite your lip or scratch your head or dig out your ears. Also your clothes should be neat, so that the whole dress, expression, posture, and bearing of the body may indicate a sincere modesty and a respectful nature.

Boy Suppose I practise?

15 **Master** Do.

Boy Is this good enough?

Master Not yet.

Boy What if I do it like this?

Master Almost.

20 **Boy** How's this?

Master Yes, that's good. Keep that posture. Don't chatter foolishly or without thinking. Don't let your mind wander but pay attention to what is said. If an answer is required, give it briefly and carefully,³ addressing the person from time to time by his proper title.⁴ Sometimes add his name as a
25 mark of respect, bending the knee slightly now and then, especially when you make your response. Don't leave without excusing yourself or unless you're dismissed. Come now, give me a demonstration of this kind of thing. How long have you been away from home?

Boy Nearly six months.

30 **Master** You should have added 'sir.'

Boy Nearly six months, sir.

Master Don't you miss your mother?

Boy Sometimes, yes.⁵

Master Would you like to go and see her?⁶

35 **Boy** I would, sir, with your kind permission.

Master Now you should have bowed low. Good; continue in that fashion. When you speak, take care not to spill the words out too fast or to stammer or to mutter in your throat, but form the habit of uttering words distinctly, clearly, articulately.⁷ If you pass an elderly person, magistrate, priest, doctor,
40 or any other man of dignity, remember to uncover your head and don't

hesitate to bend the knee. Do the same when you pass a church or crucifix.⁸ At a dinner party⁹ be cheerful, but in such fashion that you remember always what is appropriate to your age. Be the last of all to reach for the dish. If a special dainty is offered, decline politely;¹⁰ if it is urged upon

- 5 you, accept and say 'Thank you'; after taking a small serving, give the rest back to the one who offered it to you or to the person seated next to you. If anyone drinks to you, give him a health gaily but drink moderately yourself. If you're not thirsty, raise the cup to your lips anyway.¹¹ Look pleasantly at those who are speaking; say nothing yourself unless asked. If
10 anything risqué is said, don't laugh but keep a straight face, as though you don't understand.¹² Don't disparage anybody, or put on airs. Don't boast about your things, or belittle another's. Be cordial even towards companions who are poorly off. Don't accuse anyone. Don't let your tongue run away with you. Thus you will 'find sincere approval and make friends.'¹³ If
15 you notice that the dinner has dragged out, excuse yourself, say goodbye to the company, and leave the table.¹⁴ See that you bear these things in mind.

Boy I'll try, master. Anything else?

Master Go to your books now.

- 20 **Boy** Yes, sir.

NOTES

1 The rhyme is in the Latin: *aula . . . caula*.

2 On the general demands of decorum in deportment, dress, and meeting people see *De civilitate* 1, 2, and 5 LB I 1033A-1036F, 1036F-1037C, 1041C-1042E /CWE 25 273-8, 278-9, 286-8. In *De pueris instituendis* (1529) Erasmus remarks that children are taught the 'first beginnings of good behaviour and proper devotion before they can even speak' (LB I 500C-D /ASD I-2 46:22-47:12 /CWE 26 318).

3 *prudenter*. Editions before March 1533 read *puđenter* 'modestly.'

4 For some examples see 'Patterns' 7:22-8:34.

5 But he forgets to add 'sir.'

6 Cf *A Fifteenth Century School Book* ed William Nelson (Oxford 1956) 14: 'Well is my scole felows which have leve to go se ther fathers and mothers to sport them. As for me, I cannot so moch as a moment departe from my maisters side.'

7 Johann Amerbach wrote to his son Bruno, then a student in Paris, in 1505: 'I hear you're fairly studious but shy and that you try to get everything off your chest in one breath. That's not the way to do it. Be tough-minded. Bear in mind that those to whom you speak are men as you are, and talk to them calmly and slowly and distinctly. No one's after you, no one's chasing you; you're not speaking to kings and princes but to masters and scholars like yourself; don't be afraid of them' (AK Ep 265:18-25).

- 8 As the boy does in 'Youth' 92:17–21, 93:20–1, 36–9; cf *De civilitate* 3 (on behaviour in church) LB I 1037D–1038A / CWE 25 279–80. See also *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (1526) LB V 712C; *Explanatio symboli* (1533) LB V 1187F.
- 9 On behaviour at banquets cf *De civilitate* 4 (the longest chapter) LB I 1038B–1041C / CWE 25 280–6, where precise instructions are given for sitting, talking, eating, and drinking.
- 10 In *Utopia* the old men give a portion of the delicacies to others at table (*Utopia* Yale CWM 4 144:2–4).
- 11 Cf *De civilitate* LB I 1039A / CWE 25 282. For a youth to drink oftener than two or three times at dinner is neither seemly nor safe; he should wipe the cup before drinking from it (LB I 1038F / CWE 25 282). In 'A Marriage in Name Only' 853:34–5 and Allen Ep 999:67–8 / CWE Ep 999:67–8 Erasmus calls attention to the English custom of using a common cup.
- 12 This point is emphasized; to laugh at obscene words or deeds is reprehensible. Cf *De civilitate* 1, 4, and 5 LB I 1035B, 1040D, 1042B–C / CWE 25 275, 284, 287.
- 13 Cf *De civilitate* 5 LB I 1042C–D / CWE 25 288, citing Terence *Andria* 66.
- 14 Cf *De civilitate* LB I 1041B / CWE 25 285. In *De pueris instituendis* LB I 503B–C / ASD 1–2 53:1–3 / CWE 26 323 Erasmus criticizes parents who 'take their children to protracted and elaborate feasts.'

SPORT

De lusu

First printed in the March 1522 edition.

'Cocles' is the name of a speaker in 'Benefices'. Other names used here may have been borrowed from those of Erasmus' acquaintances but are too common to allow us to do more than guess who they were, except that 'Erasmus' indicates Erasmus Froben.

'Wolde god we myght go to playe!' exclaims the pupil in an early Tudor textbook (John Stanbridge's *Vulgaria* ed Beatrice White EETS original series 187 [London 1932] 28; Robert Whittinton's *Vulgaria* is in the same volume). Sixteenth-century writers had much to say on the good and bad effects of games. They believed as firmly as the ancients (or moderns) that, as Erasmus remarks in *De civilitate* 6 (LB I 1042E-F /CWE 25 289; cf *Concio de puero Iesu* LB V 610A /CWE 29 70), a boy's character shows never so plainly as in games or sports. The best of the Elizabethan writers on education, Richard Mulcaster, devotes many chapters (6–35) of his *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children* (1581) to exercises and games (ed R.H. Quick [London 1888] 40–107; see now the edition by William Barker [Toronto 1994] 51–137).

In these scenes we have the boys themselves at play, not a dissertation on exercise by the schoolmaster. Their favourite pastimes are old ones. For these and others see Brueghel's painting *Children's Games*, which shows eighty-four. At least 217 different games are mentioned in one chapter of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*; on these see Michel Psichari 'Les jeux de Gargantua (L. 1, ch. xxii)' in *Revue des études rabelaisiennes* 6 (1908) 1–37, 124–81; 7 (1909) 48–64.

In *The Governour* (1531) Sir Thomas Elyot mentions weight-throwing and tennis without comment, but he discusses and commends running and swimming (1.16). Scattered lists of games, or references to them, exist in many sixteenth-century statutes and elsewhere; see, for example, the *Paedologia* of Petrus Mosellanus (1518) trans Robert F. Seyboldt (Urbana 1927) 42–3 and Christopher Johnson's Latin poem on life at Winchester College (1550) in A.F. Leach *History of Winchester College* (London 1899) 270–1. Robert Crowley's *Voice of the Last Trumpet* (1550) in *The Select Works of Robert Crowley* ed J.M. Cowper EETS extra series 15 (London 1872; repr Millwood, NY 1975) lines 561–8 names 'caste the barre,' shooting (archery), bowling, tennis, tossing the ball, and running base as approved games for schoolboys. Among the most useful of many surveys of games and sports are Joseph Strutt *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1801), enlarged edition by J. Charles Cox (London 1903), and J.J. Jusserand *Les sports et jeux d'exercice de l'ancienne*

France (Paris 1901). For *England* see also *Shakespeare's England* ed S. Lee, 2 vols (Oxford 1916) II 451–83.

5

NICHOLAS, JEROME, COCLES, MASTER

Nicholas Inclination, the weather,¹ and the season have long been inviting us to play.

Jerome All of them are inviting, yes, only the master is not.

10 **Nicholas** Some pleader must be drafted to wrench permission from him.

Jerome 'Wrench' is right, because you could sooner wrench Hercules' club² from his hand than permission to play from the master. Yet once upon a time nobody was more eager to play.

15 **Nicholas** True enough, but he's long forgotten he was ever a boy.³ He's ready and generous with floggings but very sparing and difficult in this matter.

Jerome Nevertheless some emissary must be put forward – somebody who's not too bashful and won't be driven off at once by cruel words.⁴

Nicholas Let the one go who wants to; I'd rather do without than ask.

20 **Jerome** No one's better suited for this mission than Cocles.

Nicholas You're right; there's nothing bashful about him,⁵ and he has the gift of gab. Besides, he understands the man inside out.

Jerome Go on, Cocles, we'll all be extremely grateful to you.

Cocles Well, I'll do my best; but if I don't succeed, don't blame your pleader.

25 **Jerome** Pluck up your spirits. If I know you at all well you'll do the trick. Go as a suppliant; you'll return with your prayer answered.⁶

Cocles Mercury favour my mission!⁷ – Hail, master.

Master What has this paltry fellow in mind?

Cocles Hail, worthy master.

30 **Master** An artful politeness! I'm hale enough already. Say what you want.

Cocles The entire company of your pupils beg you to let them play.⁸

Master That's all you do even without permission.

Cocles Your wisdom is aware that wits are stimulated by moderate play, as you have taught us from Quintilian.⁹

35 **Master** Obviously you understand the part that is to your advantage! Those who work strenuously need relaxation. You, who study lazily and play eagerly, need a bit rather than a snaffle.

Cocles We work as hard as we can. And if anything has been left unfinished hitherto, it will be amended with diligence afterwards.

40 **Master** Fine menders you are! Who will be guarantor or surety for this future performance?

Cocles On peril of my head¹⁰ I will not hesitate to be surety.

Master On peril of your tail, rather. I know how risky it is to trust you, but I'll take a chance this time and see how you keep your word. If you deceive me, you'll never get anything from me again. Let them play, but together
5 in the fields. They must not do any drinking – or worse. They must return home early, before sunset.¹¹

Cocles Yes, sir. – I got permission, though it was hard work.

Jerome Good boy!¹² We all love you.

Cocles But I must warn you we daren't get into mischief or it will be taken
10 out of my hide. I pledged my word for all of you. If anything happens, you'll never get me to represent you again.

Jerome We'll be careful. But what sort of game do you like best?

Cocles We'll talk that over in the field.

15

TENNIS¹³

Nicholas There's no better exercise for all parts of the body than handball, but it's more suited to winter than summer.

Jerome For us no season of the year is unsuited for sport.

20 **Nicholas** We'll sweat less if we play with a racquet.

Jerome No, let's leave the net¹⁴ to fishermen. Using your hand is finer.¹⁵

Nicholas Come on; I don't care. But what stakes shall we play for?

Jerome A rap of the fingers – that way we'll save money.

Nicholas But I'd rather save face than money.

25 **Jerome** Me too; saving face matters more than saving money. We must play for *some* stake or else the game will lag.

Nicholas You're right.

Jerome Whichever side wins three games first will be paid a penny by the losers, but on this condition, that the winnings be spent on a feast to which
30 everyone shall be invited on equal terms.

Nicholas The law is ratified: so be it. Then it remains to draw lots for sides. We're all about equal, so it doesn't matter much which side one is on.

Jerome Yet you're much more experienced than I.

Nicholas So I am, but you're luckier.

35 **Jerome** Does Fortune prevail even in this?

Nicholas She rules everywhere.

Jerome Come, draw lots. Hurrah, it turned out well; I'm on the side I wanted.

Nicholas And we're satisfied with our team.

40 **Jerome** Come on, let's do our best. 'Victory favours diligence.'¹⁶ Let everyone guard his position stoutly. You stand behind, ready to take the ball if it flies past me. You watch there, to return the ball when the other side hits it back.

Nicholas¹⁷ Not even a fly will slip past here.

Jerome Well, good luck.¹⁸ Serve the ball¹⁹ on to the penthouse.²⁰ Whoever serves without warning loses his serve.

Nicholas There, take it.

5 **Jerome** Serve. If you serve outside the lines or below or above the penthouse, you lose; at any rate I won't have it count against us. – You serve rather badly.

Nicholas Badly for you, yes, but well for us.

Jerome I'll serve it back to you the same way. I'll give you tit for tat.²¹ But it's better to play fair and square.

10 **Nicholas** In sport it's honourable to win by skill.

Jerome I agree – and even in war. But each one, war and sport, has its own rules. And there are illiberal arts²² too.

Nicholas More than seven, I believe. Mark the chase²³ with a shell or stone, or with your cap if you prefer.

15 **Jerome** I'd prefer yours.

Nicholas Take the ball again.

Jerome Serve it. – Make the mark.

Nicholas We have two chases that are pretty far off.

Jerome However far, they can still be beaten.

20 **Nicholas** They can be beaten, all right, if nobody opposes.

Jerome Hurrah, we've passed the first mark! We've got fifteen. Ho, there, show yourselves men; we'd have won this time too if you had stood in your place. Score's tied.

Nicholas Won't be tied long. We've got thirty, we've got forty-five.²⁴

25 **Jerome** Sesterces?

Nicholas No.

Jerome What then?

Nicholas Points.

Jerome What do points matter if you've nothing to count?

30 **Nicholas** This game is ours.

Jerome You're in an awful hurry; you sing the triumph song before you gain the victory.²⁵ I've seen players win who hadn't a single point when the score stood as it does now. Luck is as fickle in sport as in war. Thirty for us! Now we're tied.

35 **Nicholas** A real battle now. Hurrah,²⁶ it worked: we're ahead!

Jerome You won't be for long. – Didn't I tell you? Once again we're tied.

Nicholas Fortune hesitates a long time, as if doubtful which side she wants to award the victory to. O Fortune, if you favour us we'll give you a husband.²⁷ Hurrah! She heard the vow. We've won the match. Make a chalk
40 mark, so the victory won't be forgotten.

Jerome Evening's almost here and we've sweated enough. Better to quit playing; 'nothing too much.'²⁸ Let's count the winnings.

Nicholas We've won three shillings; you, two. So there's one left for a little drink together. But who will pay for the balls?

Jerome We'll all pay equally, each one his share; the winnings are too small to let anything be taken from that.

5

THE GAME OF PUTTING THE SHOT²⁹

ADOLPH, BERNARD, UMPIRES

Adolph You've bragged to me time and again about how wonderful you
10 are in throwing weights. Come on, let's find out just what kind of a man you are.

Bernard I've nothing against it if you want to. Obviously you're now, as the proverb says, challenging a horse to race.³⁰

Adolph And you'll find I'm no ass.

15 **Bernard** Do you like single combat,³¹ one against one, or would you prefer company in your danger?

Adolph I prefer single combat, so that no share of the victory may fall to another.

Bernard I vote for the same, so that my praise may be entirely mine.

20 **Adolph** These fellows will be spectators and umpires.

Bernard Agreed. But what shall be the victor's prize or the loser's penalty?

Adolph What if the loser has an ear cut off?

Bernard No, one of his testicles, rather. To contend for money is not noble. You're German, I'm French; let each contend for the glory of his nation. If I
25 win, you shout three times, 'May France flourish!' If I lose – which I hope I won't – I'll celebrate your Germany in the same way.

Adolph Good; I'm satisfied.

Bernard Fortune favour me! Since two mighty nations are at stake in this game, let the weights be equal.

30 **Adolph** You know that big stone near the gate?

Bernard Yes, I know it.

Adolph That will be the goal and this the line.

Bernard All right, but mind the weights be equal, I say.

Adolph They're as much alike as eggs³² or figs. Choose whichever one you
35 like; it makes no difference to me.

Bernard Throw.

Adolph Say, you whirl the shot as if you had a catapult, not an arm.

Bernard You've bitten your lip³³ and swung your arm enough. Go on and throw it. The strength of Hercules! But still I win.

40 **Adolph** If that damned little brick hadn't been in the way, I'd have beaten you.

Bernard Stand at the mark of your shot.

Adolph I won't cheat. I want to win by excellence, not by trickery, since it is a contest for glory. Here's hoping for luck!

Bernard A mighty throw certainly.

5 **Adolph** Don't laugh before you've won. So far we're tied.

Bernard The match is being decided now. Whichever one touches the goal first, wins.

Adolph I've won! Sing out.

Bernard But it should have been agreed which throw would give the victory,
10 because in the first try we weren't warmed up yet.

Adolph Let the umpires decide.

Umpires The third.

Bernard All right.

Adolph What do you say? Do you admit I won?

15 **Bernard** Fortune favoured you more; in strength and skill I won't yield to you. But I'll abide by the umpires' decision.³⁴

Umpires The German has won, and his victory is the more glorious because he defeated so skilful an opponent.

Adolph Now sing, Frenchy.

20 **Bernard** I'm hoarse.

Adolph Nothing new for cocks,³⁵ but crow anyway.

Bernard 'May Germany flourish thrice!'

Adolph Oh, no, it was to be *sung* three times.

Bernard We're a bit thirsty. Let's go have a little drink. The song can be
25 finished there.

Adolph I won't decline if it suits the umpires.

Bernard It's more comfortable that way; a cock will crow better if his throat's well liquored.

30 THE GAME OF SENDING A BALL THROUGH AN IRON RING³⁶
GASPAR, ERASMIUS³⁷

Gaspar Come on, we'll begin. Marcolphus will take the loser's place.

Erasmus But what prize shall the winner have?

35 **Gaspar** The loser shall compose extempore and recite a couplet in praise of the winner.

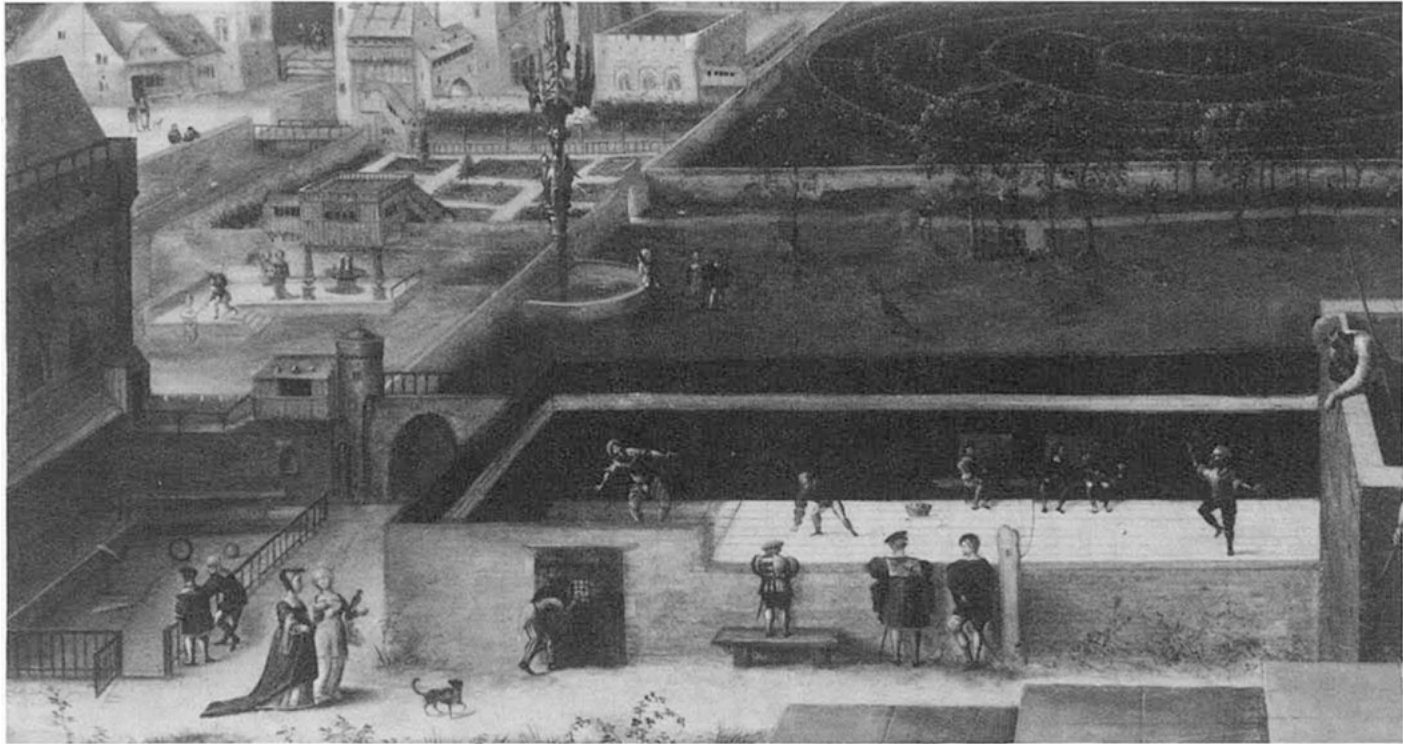
Erasmus Agreed.

Gaspar Do you want to draw lots to determine priority?

Erasmus You be prior, if you like; I'd rather be abbot.

40 **Gaspar** You've an advantage because you know the ground.

Erasmus You're an old hand at this game.



Two of the games described in 'Sport':
on the right, tennis; on the left, sending a ball through a hoop
Herri met de Bles (d 1550) *The Story of David and Bathsheba*, detail
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston

Gaspar I'm better at this than at my studies. But that makes very little difference.

Erasmus It's only fair that as an expert player you should make some concession to me in this contest.

- 5 **Gaspar** No, it would be more fair for me to ask that of you; but a victory that is begged is not honestly won. The winner, truly, is he who wins by his own efforts.³⁸ We're as evenly matched as Bachius and Bithus³⁹ were long ago.

Erasmus Your ball's better than mine.

Gaspar But your mallet⁴⁰ beats mine.

- 10 **Erasmus** Play fair, without any tricks or cheating.

Gaspar You'll say you've dealt with an honest man.

Erasmus But first I want to hear the rules of this ball game.

- Gaspar** You get four chances. Whoever goes past this line is penalized. If you go beyond the other boundaries, that's quite all right. Whoever moves
15 the ball from its place loses his turn.

Erasmus I understand.

Gaspar Look, I've blocked you.

Erasmus But I'll knock you out of there.

Gaspar If you do I'll concede the victory⁴¹ to you.

- 20 **Erasmus** You really mean that?

Gaspar Positively. You can't win unless you send your ball against the wall so that it glances off mine.⁴²

Erasmus I'll try that. – What do you say to that, my friend? Are you removed or not?

- 25 **Gaspar** Yes – I admit it. I wish you were as smart as you are lucky! But if you tried that a hundred times it would hardly succeed once.

Erasmus On the contrary. If you dare to bet, I'll bet I can do it in three tries. But meanwhile give the prize agreed upon.

Gaspar What?

- 30 **Erasmus** The couplet.

Gaspar I'll give it.

Erasmus And extempore, too. – What are you biting your nails about?

Gaspar I have it.

Erasmus Say it clearly.

- 35 **Gaspar** Very clearly.

Let all applaud the victor, boys, for what he's done.

He beat me: so the clever fool has won.

- 40 There, you have your couplet, don't you?

Erasmus Yes, but I'll pay you back in kind.

JUMPING⁴³
VINCENT, LAWRENCE⁴⁴

Vincent Like a jumping contest?

5 **Lawrence** Not a suitable sport for people who have just eaten lunch.

Vincent Why not?

Lawrence Because the belly's load⁴⁵ weighs down the body.

Vincent That's not altogether true of those who lunch in the boys' quarters. They're often hungry for dinner before they've finished lunch.

10 **Lawrence** Well, then, what kind of jumping do you like?

Vincent Let's begin with the simplest: grasshopper style or rather leapfrog, with both legs but feet together. The one who jumps farthest wins the crown. When we're tired of this kind we'll try others in turn.

Lawrence I'll try any kind unless it's dangerous to the legs. I don't want to
15 fall into the surgeon's hands.

Vincent What about a contest of hopping on one leg?

Lawrence That's the sport of Empusa;⁴⁶ none of that.

Vincent Vaulting's very nice.

Lawrence Racing is nobler, since Aeneas in Virgil proposed this kind of
20 contest.⁴⁷

Vincent True, but he likewise proposed boxing,⁴⁸ which I don't fancy.

Lawrence Mark out the course. Let the starting gate be here, that oak there the goal.

Vincent But I wish Aeneas were on hand to offer prizes for the winner,
25 too.

Lawrence Glory is ample reward for the winner.

Vincent The loser should be given a consolation prize.

Lawrence Let the loser's reward be that he go back to town crowned with a bur.

30 **Vincent** All right, I won't refuse to do that if you march ahead as piper.

Lawrence It's awfully hot.

Vincent No wonder, since this is midsummer.

Lawrence Swimming would have been better.

Vincent A frog's life does not appeal to me. I'm a land animal, not an
35 amphibian.

Lawrence Yet this sort of exercise was anciently regarded as a noble sport.⁴⁹

Vincent A useful one, rather.

Lawrence Useful for what?

40 **Vincent** Those who have practised running and swimming fare best if they have to flee in war.

Lawrence The skill you describe is by no means to be scorned, for at times to flee well is no less commendable than to fight bravely.

Vincent I'm quite clumsy and inexperienced as a swimmer. Not without danger do we change elements.

5 **Lawrence** But you have to get used to it. No one's born an expert.

Vincent Yet I've heard of many experts of this kind who have gone swimming and not swum back.

Lawrence You could try it by supporting yourself on cork⁵⁰ at first.

Vincent I don't trust cork⁵¹ any more than feet; if your heart's set on
10 swimming, I'd rather be a spectator than a competitor.

NOTES

1 'The Maister shulde do us all a great pleasur today yf he wolde gyve us leve to go make us mery this afternone while the weder is so fair, for it is doutefull yf hereafter ther wolde be so great a temperatnes of weder' (*A Fifteenth Century School Book* ed William Nelson [Oxford 1956] 40).

2 *Adagia* IV i 95

3 'Olde or dotyng chourles can not suffre yonge children to be mery' is a complaint in William Horman's *Vulgaria* (1519) ed M.R. James for the Roxburghe Club (Oxford 1926) 128.

4 Cf Terence *Phormio* 213.

5 *perfrictae frontis est*; see *Adagia* I viii 47, often used by Erasmus.

6 *Abi orator, redibis exorator*; cf Terence *Hecyra* 9–10.

7 Mercury was the patron of speech and eloquence (see eg *Adagia* II x 10, IV iv 91).

8 The boys request a special half-holiday or 'remedy' as it was called in Tudor schools. In his statutes for St Paul's School Dean Colet forbade these, and the master was to be fined unless the occasion for a remedy was the visit of the king or an archbishop or bishop (Lupton *Life of Colet* 278). For, as Horman says, 'Many remedies make easy [lazy] scholars' (*Vulgaria* [n3 above] 143).

9 Quintilian 1.3.8–12. See Allen Ep 56:21–6 / CWE Ep 56:24–30. The boy does well to promise 'moderate' play, for the master knows their sports are often rough. The headmaster of Eton reported in 1530 that there were prepositors in the fields when the boys played, 'for fyghtyng, rent clothes, blew eyes, or siche like' (Leach *Educational Charters and Documents 598 to 1909* [Cambridge 1911] 450).

10 Caesar *Bellum Gallicum* 7.1.5. Cocles hopes to impress the master by another reference to a classical text.

11 The statutes of King's School, Canterbury (1541) say: 'When leave to play is given they shall play and sport together, lest, wandering about here and there, they incur some loss of character, and wanting to do other things their minds gradually become estranged from learning. And they shall not practise any games which are not of a gentlemanly appearance and free of all lowness' (Leach *Educational Charters and Documents* [n9 above] 469). Vives advised that

boys be required to speak Latin even in their sports and that whoever lapsed into the vernacular tongue should lose a point in the game (*De tradendis disciplinis* 3.4 in *Vives: On Education* ed and trans Foster Watson [Cambridge 1913; repr Totowa, NJ 1971] 121).

12 *lepidum caput*; cf Terence *Adelphi* 968.

13 *pila palmaria*. Partly handball, partly tennis; long known in France as *jeu de paume*; the 'palm play' of Surrey's poem beginning 'So cruel prison how could betide alas' (1537). Strutt (introduction 74 above) calls it 'hand-tennis' as well as 'handball,' 'palm play,' and 'tennis' (*The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* 2.3.4). The game enjoyed by these schoolboys is obviously a simple or primitive kind, played without racquets and with the shed or roof of some neighbouring building as the 'penthouse.' In its most elaborate form 'tennis' was the game known as court tennis, the ancestor of modern lawn tennis and squash racquets. For centuries it was the sport of kings and nobles. Castiglione approves of it (*Courtier* 2.10), provided his courtier plays as a true amateur and with sufficient *sprezzatura*.

Court tennis was played on an enclosed rectangular court; Scaino (see below) describes one as large as 114 feet long and four stories high. There were inner and outer walls and a long sloping roof (penthouse) along one side and each end. The inner wall had various openings; a ball hit into certain of these scored a point. Players (but not those in our dialogue) used racquets, which had been introduced by 1500, and a lightweight but solid ball, served over a cord or net. Rude though the game played by Erasmus' schoolboys is when contrasted with the elaborateness of the sport and the courts used by Francis I or Henry VIII, the vocabulary describing it is much the same. For technical and historical accounts of varieties of tennis as played in the Renaissance see the classic treatise of Antonio Scaino, *Trattato del giuoco della palla* (Venice 1555) trans W.W. Kershaw (London 1951); Julian Marshall *Annals of Tennis* (London 1878); Albert de Luze *La magnifique histoire du jeu de paume* (Paris 1933). To Scaino, who was a doctor of theology but evidently made tennis a way of life, the game was productive of moral and philosophical as well as physical excellence.

Pantagrue plays tennis at Paris (1.23), and Rabelais' account of the Thelemites concludes with a comparison of human life to a tennis match (1.58). See Abel Lefranc *La vie quotidienne au temps de la Renaissance* (Paris 1938) 173–6. In English literature the most familiar allusion to the game is Henry V's speech in Shakespeare's play (1.2.252–88). Henry VII played tennis; his son Henry VIII built in 1529–30 the court still used at Hampton Court Palace, and he often played there. Some Oxford and Cambridge colleges had tennis courts, *sphaeristeria*. 'Sphaeristike' long meant 'tennis.' As late as 1874 Francis Kilvert writes, 'We began to play "sphairistike" or lawn tennis' (*Kilvert's Diary, 1870–1879: Selections from the Diary of the Rev. Francis Kilvert* ed William Plomer [New York 1947] 290); lawn tennis had just been invented (1873).

14 *reticulum*. The same word is used in the preceding line, where it means 'racquet,' not what is now called the net. The earliest racquets were gloves with netting stretched across them.

15 Scaino's treatise (n13 above) includes an eloquent debate between a Frenchman and an Italian over the respective merits of tennis played with the hand and the racquet (2.21).

- 16 Catullus 62.16
- 17 Nicholas . . . here.] In the first and other editions before February 1526 this line is given to Cocles. Cf *Adagia* II i 84.
- 18 *bonis avibus*; *Adagia* I i 75
- 19 On serving, see Scaino (n13 above) 2.25.
- 20 *tectum*. Here the same as 'roof,' though in court tennis the correct term is 'penthouse.'
- 21 *Adagia* I i 35
- 22 The same word, *ars*, is used here and in line 10 for 'skill.' Illiberal arts are ignoble, banausic, moneymaking occupations as opposed to those pursued for their own sakes (an Aristotelian distinction; *Politics* 8.2 1337b3–23).
- 23 A technical term for a line marking the place where an unreturned ball strikes or bounces. Its importance is determined by how close it is to the end wall. After the players change sides the one against whom the chase was marked tries to make the ball fall closer to the back wall; if he succeeds he wins a point. For the term see *Henry v* 1.2.266, and cf More's *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* (1532) book 1 Yale CWM 8 part 1 139:17–18: 'It is pytye yt the man were not made a marker of chases in some tenys playe,' a complaint about Tyndale's habit of telling his readers to 'mark this,' 'mark that.'
- 24 On scoring, see Scaino (n13 above) 1.11, 18, 47.
- 25 *Adagia* I vii 55
- 26 Hurrah . . . ahead!] In the 1522 editions spoken by Jerome
- 27 Because of her inconstancy Fortune was, proverbially, a strumpet.
- 28 *ne quid nimis*, another favourite aphorism of Erasmus'; *Adagia* I vi 96
- 29 Hurling weights, stones, discus, or 'hammer' was an aristocratic diversion even in Homeric times (*Iliad* 23.826–49). James I of Scotland excelled in such sports (*Kingis Quair* ed W.M. MacKenzie [Edinburgh 1939] 22).
- 30 *in planiciem equum*, challenging a champion or expert to a contest; *Adagia* I viii 82
- 31 Greek in the original
- 32 *Adagia* I v 10
- 33 *Adagia* III vii 69
- 34 It is bad form to find fault with their decision (*De civilitate* 6 LB I 1042F /CWE 25 288).
- 35 With the usual pun on *Gallus* 'Gaul,' 'Frenchman' and *gallus* 'cock'; see 'Patterns' n71 (end).
- 36 A game resembling croquet, known in the sixteenth century as 'pall-mall.' A large iron ring was set up at one end of an alley or enclosed area and a wooden ball hit through it with a wooden mallet or racquet. A game known in Belgium as *beugelbaan* corresponds closely to the one described by Erasmus. See J. Hoyoux in 'Un "jeu" d'Erasme' *Humanisme et Renaissance* 4 (1937) 78–80.
- 37 Gaspar appears in 'Youth.' Erasmus is in 'The Profane Feast,' most editions of 'Youth,' and 'The Art of Learning,' but there is serious uncertainty as to the accuracy of the name in 'Youth' and 'The Profane Feast.' On this question see Erasmus and Erasmus' 1120–1.
Erasmus Froben (named at 'Patterns' 10:30), younger son of Erasmus' friend and publisher Johann Froben of Basel, was about seven years of age when the March 1522 edition of the *Colloquies* was dedicated to him by the author. Three

other Froben editions used this same dedicatory text, those of July–August 1522, August 1523, and March 1524. Another dedication accompanied the edition of August–September 1524. For these letters, Epp 1262 and 1476, see pages 2–3 of this translation. For a reproduction of the presentation copy of the July–August 1522 edition, see the frontispiece of this volume. Erasmus wrote to Erasmus again in November 1529 when sending to him a copy of another new edition (Ep 2229). It seems characteristic that young Erasmus forgot this letter or left it behind in Freiburg and that Erasmus had to send it after him. Erasmus was genuinely fond of his godson and tried to look out for him (see Ep 2231), but his high hopes were disappointed, for the boy had little aptitude for study. In ‘The Art of Learning’ (1529), where Desiderius warns ‘Erasmus’ that there is no easy road to learning, we find plain hints of the pupil’s failure to match his illustrious patron’s expectations. In Ep 2231 (and see Allen Ep 2235:1–15, 2236:1–3) Erasmus is concerned lest the boy’s mind be corrupted by the reformers in Basel and advises that he be sent to Paris or Louvain. At the same time he expresses uneasiness about Erasmus’ lack of scholastic progress. Conradus Goclenius reported confidentially in 1530 that Erasmus was a slow learner with a mind like a sieve (Allen Ep 2352:285–7). By 1538 Erasmus had joined his stepfather, Johann Herwagen, who had been a member of the Froben firm, in the printing trade, but probably in a minor role. Erasmus left him two rings (Allen xi 364:24–5 Appendix 25). Little is known of his later life. He died in 1549. See CEBR.

- 38 *suo Marte vincit*; *Adagia* I vi 19
- 39 Famous gladiators; *Adagia* II v 97, from Horace *Satires* 1.7.20. Cf *De copia* CWE 24 491:21.
- 40 *vola*. In classical usage the palm or hollow of the hand, but (as Hoyoux observes; see n36 above) it seems here to be contrasted with ‘ball’ (*sphaera* in the preceding line) and hence to refer to the mallet with which the ball is hit.
- 41 *cedam certaminis palmam*; cf *Adagia* I iii 4.
- 42 That is, caroms off Gaspar’s, rolls into the hoop, and scores
- 43 Mulcaster’s *Positions* (introduction 74 above) devotes a chapter (22) to this sport, which he recommends. Ascham, on Aristotelian principles, rejects it as ‘to vile for scholars’ (*Toxophilus* in *English Works* ed W.A. Wright [Cambridge 1904; repr 1970] 18).
- 44 Lawrence is one of the boys in ‘Hunting.’
- 45 *saburra* ‘sand,’ used as ballast. See *Adagia* III vii 57; Plautus *Cistellaria* 121.
- 46 Elusive spectre who took different forms, as Erasmus had read in Aristophanes *Frogs* 293 and Lucian *De saltatione* 19; *Adagia* II ii 74
- 47 *Aeneid* 5.286–361
- 48 *Aeneid* 5.362–7
- 49 Sixteenth-century writers disagreed about the advantages and respectability of swimming as a sport. Castiglione (1.22) thought a courtier should learn to swim. Elyot (*The Governour* 1.17) agrees, but only because of its usefulness in military emergencies. Mulcaster (*Positions* chapter 23) strongly approves, though with a few reservations. On Everard Digby’s *De arte natandi* (1587), the principal English contribution to the literature of swimming, and on the limitations of sixteenth-century pronouncements about swimming, see Michael West ‘Spenser, Everard Digby, and the Renaissance Art of Swimming’

Renaissance Quarterly 26 (1973) 11–22 and Nicholas Orme *Early British Swimming* (Exeter 1984).

50 As children did; *Adagia* I viii 42. See, for example one in Brueghel's *Children's Games*, and cf Shakespeare *Henry VIII* 3.2.360–2.

51 See *Adagia* II iv 7.

THE WHOLE DUTY OF YOUTH

Confabulatio pia

First printed in the March 1522 edition as *Confabulatio pia*. In 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' it is called *Pietas puerilis*.

Two of the boys in the preceding colloquy are named Erasmus and Gaspar. The name Erasmus recalls Erasmus Froben, Erasmus' godson, who was six or seven years old in 1522 (see 'Sport' n37). In the present colloquy 'Erasmus' is printed in the first and subsequent editions until the final authorized one of March 1533, when it was changed to 'Erasmus'; and so it appears in the 1538-40 *Opera omnia* and LB. See 'Erasmus and Erasmus' 1120-1.

Though a schoolboy of sixteen (96:16), Gaspar discourses on grave topics with a wisdom beyond his years. He is 'a youngster not yet grown up' ('The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1107:2). He describes himself as a grammar-school pupil and a 'simple boy,' yet is questioned about his studies as though he were close to the time for deciding on a profession. Such seeming inconsistency need not trouble us if we make allowance for the author's purposes. And Gaspar is no ordinary schoolboy but an idealized, Erasmian one: precocious, even a little priggish. For some readers he may bring to mind another precocious and unusually earnest boy who was at St Paul's School a century later, John Milton.

That school, with which this colloquy is always and rightly associated, was refounded by John Colet, dean of St Paul's Cathedral, in 1509-12. The association is confirmed by Erasmus' numerous connections with the school and by the reference to Colet at 99:18 below. If Gaspar is partially drawn from life, the most likely original was Thomas Lupset (c 1498-1530), one of Colet's early and favourite pupils at the school. Gaspar says he had been a member of Colet's household. We know that this was true of Lupset: 'my scholar,' Colet called him (Lupton *Life of Colet* 231; J.A. Gee *Life and Works of Thomas Lupset* (New Haven 1928) 34-41). Anyone familiar with Erasmus' writings on education and his contacts with Colet and St Paul's School will agree that Colet's principles and programme were in Erasmus' mind on every page of this colloquy. (For Colet in another colloquy see 'A Pilgrimage' 642:40-648:31 and nn145-6, 157, 167, 171, 180). The encounter with Colet during Erasmus' first visit to England in 1499 led to an enduring friendship. They were nearly the same age (Allen Ep 1211:284-5 / CWE Ep 1211:313-14). Colet lacked Erasmus' variety of intellectual gifts, distrusted poetry, had no Greek, and was not a humanist, at least in the sense that Erasmus was, but their mutual attraction enriched their lives. They shared a strong dislike of scholastic

philosophy and agreed on the urgency of restoring Christianity to its earlier character. Whether Colet's influence was decisive in Erasmus' commitment to New Testament studies, as is often asserted, can be questioned. What is not in doubt is that the example of Colet's piety and morality affected him for the rest of his life. Thomas More excepted, there was no other Englishman he praised so highly or so often. (W.H. Herendeen, however, sees Colet as patron rather than reformer; '*Coletus Redivivus: John Colet – Patron or Reformer*' *Renaissance and Reformation* new series 12 [1988] 163–88.)

For Erasmus' estimate of Colet the primary source is his correspondence, especially the memoir in Ep 1211 (which reveals as much about the writer as about Colet). It deserves close attention and is fundamental to all later biographies of Colet. Of these J.H. Lupton's is still standard. See also John B. Gleason *John Colet* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London 1989); E.H. Harbison *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation* (New York 1956) 55–90; CEBR; J.B. Trapp 'John Colet, His Manuscripts and the Ps.-Dionysius' in *Classical Influences on European Culture AD 1500–1700* ed R.R. Bolgar (Cambridge 1976) 205–21. On St Paul's see *A History of St. Paul's School* (London 1909) and *The Annals of St. Paul's School* (Cambridge 1959), both by M.F.J. McDonnell.

Erasmus' services to St Paul's School, apart from personal consultation and correspondence with Colet, may be summarized as follows. He revised a Latin syntax prepared by William Lily, the first high master; this was published in 1513 as *De constructione octo partium orationis* (LB I 167–80 / ASD I-4 105–43). With some material from others it grew into a grammar (in two parts, one in English, the other in Latin, in the same volume) that in its 1542 edition contained a royal proclamation, renewed later by Elizabeth I, forbidding the use of any other grammar in schools (see CWE 24 450). This was the grammar – called 'Lily's' or 'the royal grammar' – that Shakespeare and other Tudor schoolboys studied. Erasmus' widely used manual on composition, *De copia* (first official edition 1512; translation of the 1534 edition in CWE 24 279–659), was dedicated to Colet (Ep 260). Earlier portions of it are preserved in the *Colloquies* ('A Short Rule for Copiousness'). For an image of the child Jesus 'seated, in the manner of one teaching,' above the high master's chair Erasmus wrote some verses; for these and other verses he wrote for the school see LB V 1320F–1321D / CWE 85–6 88–93, 501–4 nos 44–8 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 297–300 nos 86–90. He wrote *Concio de puero Iesu* (c 1511) for the school (LB V 599B–610A / CWE 29 51–70; anonymous English translation [c 1536] STC 10509) and put into verse, under the title *Institutum christiani hominis* (1514), a catechism for youth by Colet (LB V 1357D–1359F / CWE 85–6 92–107, 505–9 no 49 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 307 no 94). Several of the prayers in Erasmus' *Precationes* (collected 1535) were long used at St Paul's; these are identified below in the notes.

Probably because it treated certain troublesome questions of contemporary religion informally and with restraint, 'The Whole Duty of Youth'

was the most widely quoted and imitated work in the March 1522 edition. It was one of three colloquies translated twice into Spanish, in 1528 and 1529 (Bataillon *Erasmus y España* [1966] 289, 290–2, 294–6 and bibliography nos 477, 478–9). Juan de Valdés admired it and echoed some of its ideas on confession, fasting, and prayer – dangerously Lutheran ideas, the orthodox thought – in his *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* (1529). See the facsimile edition with introduction and notes by Marcel Bataillon (Coimbra 1925) fol lxiii and 264–7, 289; see also his *Erasmus y España* (1966) 535. On connections between the colloquy and Alfonso de Valdés' dialogue *Mercurio y Caron* (1529) see ibidem 387–404; for other examples 286–309. For Juan de Valdés in English see *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers* ed George H. Williams and Angel M. Mergal (Philadelphia 1954) 297–390. Conservatives as well as reformers found ways to use this dialogue. As late as 1657 the *Dialogi familiares* of Antoine van Torre borrowed from it and some other early colloquies, but with changes in order to render them wholly suitable for Jesuit schools (F. Bierlaire 'Des Colloques d'Erasmus aux Dialogues du Père Antoine van Torre' *Les études classiques* 41 [1973] 50–61).

In a report to Thomas Cromwell (1534), Henry Dowes, tutor to Cromwell's son Gregory, wrote about the boy's recent progress: 'And firste, after he hath herde Masse he taketh a lecture of a Diologe of Erasmus Colloquium, called Pietas puerilis, wherinne is described a veray picture of oone that sholde be vertuouselie brought upp.' To encourage the boy to practise the precepts of the colloquy as well as read it, Dowes turned it into English, so that Gregory might compare the two versions (*Original Letters Illustrative of English History* ed Sir Henry Ellis [London 1824–46; repr New York 1970] 3rd series I 344; LP VII no 1135 page 446). No copy of this translation is known.

For precocity and self-discipline, the youth of most promise in Tudor England, 'a prince who would have delighted the fastidious and demanding taste of Erasmus,' was the boy who became Edward VI (*The Chronicle and Political Papers of Edward VI* ed W.K. Jordan [Ithaca 1966] xii). His rigorous education followed an Erasmian curriculum. In a note to his tutor he quotes this colloquy; see n72 below.

ERASMUS, GASPAR

Erasmus Where have you come from? Some tavern?

Gaspar Speak politely, if you please.

5 **Erasmus** From a tennis court?¹

Gaspar Not that, either.

Erasmus A wineshop?

Gaspar Certainly not.

Erasmus Since I don't come close by guessing, tell me yourself.

Gaspar From St Mary's Church.

5 **Erasmus** What business have you there?

Gaspar I gave some greetings.

Erasmus To whom?

Gaspar To Christ and several saints.

Erasmus Well, you seem unusually religious for your age.

10 **Gaspar** Religion is appropriate to any age.

Erasmus If I wanted to be religious I'd put on a cowl.

Gaspar So would I, if a cowl provided as much piety as warmth.²

Erasmus It's proverbial that angelic boys become limbs of Satan when they grow old.³

15 **Gaspar** But that proverb came from Satan himself, I believe. No, I scarcely think an old man is genuinely devout unless he has been so from his youth up. What is learned best is learned from earliest childhood.⁴

Erasmus What, then, is religion?

20 **Gaspar** The undefiled worship of the Deity⁵ and the keeping of his commandments.

Erasmus What are they?

Gaspar That's a long story, but they can be summed up in four points.

Erasmus In which four?

25 **Gaspar** First, that we think rightly and reverently of God and the Sacred Scriptures and not only fear God as Lord but also love him with our whole hearts as a most gracious Father. Second, that we do our utmost to keep ourselves blameless, that is, injure no one. Third, that we practise charity, that is, insofar as possible deserve well of all men. Fourth, that we be long-suffering, inasmuch as this enables us to bear patiently the ills we cannot remedy, forgoing vengeance and not returning evil for evil.⁶

30 **Erasmus** You're a good preacher, certainly. But do you practise what you preach?

Gaspar At least I try as hard as I can.

Erasmus How hard can you try when you're only a boy?

35 **Gaspar** I think things over to the best of my ability and balance my account every day. If I did something amiss, I correct it: that was unseemly; this word spoken petulantly; this action done unadvisedly; on this occasion I should have kept quiet; that action I should have left undone.

Erasmus When is this accounting made?

40 **Gaspar** At night, ordinarily, or whenever I have more leisure than usual.

Erasmus But tell me, now, how do you spend the whole day?

Gaspar I'll keep nothing from so good a friend. As soon as I get up in the morning – about five or six o'clock, that is – I make the sign of the cross on my forehead and breast.

Erasmus Then what?

5 **Gaspar** I begin the day by invoking the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁷

Erasmus Devoutly done.

Gaspar Next I salute Christ in a few words.

Erasmus What do you say to him?

Gaspar I give thanks for his having deigned to preserve me that night, and
10 I pray that during the entire day likewise he will bless me to his glory and the salvation of my soul; and that he who is the true light which knows no setting, the sun eternal giving life to all, nourishing and inspiring them, may be pleased to illumine my mind, that I may not in any way fall into sin but by his guidance attain to everlasting life.⁸

15 **Erasmus** Not a bad way to begin the day.

Gaspar Then I greet my parents, to whom, after God, I owe most reverence.⁹ When the time comes I go to grammar school,¹⁰ but on my way I go past a church if possible.

Erasmus What do you do there?

20 **Gaspar** Again I salute Jesus and all the saints briefly, but particularly the Virgin Mother and my patron saints.

Erasmus Surely you must have read well that precept of Cato's, 'Be generous with greetings.'¹¹ Wasn't the early-morning salutation enough without repeating it soon afterwards? Aren't you afraid of overdoing

25 it?

Gaspar Christ loves to be invoked repeatedly.

Erasmus But it seems foolish to address someone you can't see.

Gaspar Neither can I see that part of myself by which I speak to him.

Erasmus Which part?

30 **Gaspar** My soul.

Erasmus But to salute one who does not return your greeting is a waste of time.

Gaspar He returns it often by his secret inspiration. In a word,¹² he who grants what is sought returns a greeting abundantly.

35 **Erasmus** What do you ask of him in your prayer? For I see that your greetings are petitions, like those of beggars.

Gaspar Yes, you're not far from the mark.¹³ I pray that he who as a boy of twelve, sitting in the temple, taught the doctors¹⁴ themselves, and to whom the heavenly Father with his own voice gave authority to teach the human
40 race when he said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him,'¹⁵ and who is the eternal wisdom of the almighty Father – I pray that

he will be pleased to illuminate my understanding for the learning of good letters, which I may use to his glory.¹⁶

Erasmus Who are your patron saints?

Gaspar Of apostles, Paul; of martyrs, Cyprian; of doctors, Jerome; of virgins, Agnes.¹⁷

Erasmus What recommended them to you, deliberate choice or chance?

Gaspar They fell to my lot.

Erasmus And do you merely salute them or do you beg something from them too?

10 **Gaspar** I beseech them to commend me to Christ in their prayers and to bring it about that by his gift¹⁸ I may sometime be admitted into their company.

Erasmus Clearly it's no ordinary boon you ask. What do you do after that?

Gaspar I hurry to school and there do with my whole heart whatever the
15 occasion requires. I implore the aid of Christ,¹⁹ as if our effort would be ineffectual without his help: I study as if he would grant no help except to one who works hard. And I labour all I can not to deserve a whipping or displease either the teacher or my schoolfellows by word or deed.

Erasmus Those thoughts do you credit.

20 **Gaspar** When school's out I hurry home, passing the church again if I have the time and again saluting Jesus in a few words. If there's any service I ought to perform for my parents, I attend to it. And if there's any time left I review my lesson by myself or with a friend.

Erasmus You don't waste time.

25 **Gaspar** No wonder if I'm sparing of what is both priceless and irrecoverable.

Erasmus But Hesiod advises us to be sparing in the middle term; parsimony in the beginning is too early, in the end too late.²⁰

Gaspar Hesiod's right about wine, but saving time is never out of season. If you let a cask stand, it's not drained; but time is always passing, whether
30 you're asleep or awake.

Erasmus Granted. But what do you do next?

Gaspar When the table is set for my parents, I ask the blessing. Then I wait on them until I myself am bidden to eat lunch. After grace is said²¹ I relax, if I have nothing else to do, by playing some wholesome game with companions
35 until it's time to return from play to school.²²

Erasmus Is Jesus saluted again?

Gaspar He is if it's convenient, but if for any reason there isn't time, or if it isn't opportune, I nevertheless salute him briefly in my mind as I pass the church. Back at school I do as best I can whatever has to be done.
40 On my return home I do the same as I did before lunch. After dinner I entertain myself with some pleasant stories; then, bidding my parents and

the household goodnight, I go early to my room.²³ There on my knees²⁴ beside the bed, I review to myself, as I said, the day's pursuits. If I committed any serious wrongs I ask Christ's mercy, that he may forgive me, and I promise to do better; if there is nothing, I give thanks for his loving-kindness
 5 in keeping me from every fault. Then I commend myself entirely to him²⁵ in all sincerity, to the end that he may preserve me from the wiles of the devil and from unclean dreams. This done, I get into bed, cross myself on brow and breast²⁶ and settle myself to sleep.

Erasmus How do you settle yourself?²⁷

- 10 **Gaspar** I don't sleep prone or on my back, but resting first on my right side I cross my arms in the form of an X, so that they guard my breast by the sign of the cross – my right hand reaching to my left shoulder and my left hand to the right shoulder. Thus I sleep gently until I wake up or am called.

Erasmus You're rather saintly²⁸ to be able to do that.

- 15 **Gaspar** No, you're rather silly to say so.

Erasmus I commend your practice and wish I could follow it.

Gaspar You could if you only resolved to do so. When you've accustomed yourself to them for a few months, these practices will be so agreeable they'll become second nature.

- 20 **Erasmus** But I hear nothing about divine worship.

Gaspar I don't neglect it, especially on holy days.

Erasmus How do you conduct yourself then?²⁹

Gaspar First of all I examine myself as to whether my mind is defiled by any stain of sin.

- 25 **Erasmus** If you find it is, what then? Do you withdraw from the altar?

Gaspar Not physically, but I remove myself mentally, and standing as it were afar off, not daring to lift up my eyes to God the Father, against whom I have sinned, I beat my breast, uttering the cry of the publican in the Gospel, 'Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.'³⁰ Next, if I'm aware I've injured anyone

- 30 I take pains to placate him then and there if possible; failing that, I resolve to be reconciled with my brother at the earliest opportunity.³¹ If anyone has injured me I forgo vengeance and try to get the one who did the injury to acknowledge his fault and come to a better mind. If there's no hope of this, I leave all vengeance to God.

- 35 **Erasmus** That's hard to do.

Gaspar Hard to forgive your brother a slight offence – a brother whose pardon you in turn might often need – when Christ once for all forgave all our sins and every day forgives us? No, this does not strike me as generosity towards a neighbour but usury with reference to God, as though a servant
 40 should remit to his fellow servant three shillings of a debt in order that his master might forgive *him* ten talents.³²

Erasmus You reason very well, if only what you say is certain.

Gaspar Do you ask anything more certain than the assurance of the Gospel?

Erasmus To do that is wrong. But some people don't think they're Christians unless they hear mass, as they call it, every day.

- 5 **Gaspar** I don't condemn their custom, of course, especially when they have plenty of leisure or are persons who spend the whole day in worldly occupations. I simply disapprove of those who persuade themselves superstitiously that the day will be unlucky unless they begin it with mass and go straight from divine service to trade or moneymaking or court where,
10 if their business succeeds – whether by hook or by crook³³ – they attribute success to the mass.³⁴

Erasmus Are there people so foolish?

Gaspar A large part of mankind.

Erasmus But go back to divine worship.

- 15 **Gaspar** If possible I stand close to the sacred altar, where I can understand the words read by the priest, especially the Epistle and Gospel. From these I try to carry away something I can fix in my mind; on this I meditate³⁵ from time to time.

Erasmus Don't you pray, though?

- 20 **Gaspar** I do pray,³⁶ but with my mind rather than aloud. From what is read by the priest I seize some occasion for prayer.

Erasmus Tell me more fully, because I don't altogether follow your meaning.

- Gaspar** I'll tell you. Suppose the Epistle is read on 'Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.'³⁷ With
25 respect to these words I speak inwardly to Christ in this manner: 'May I be truly unleavened, pure of every leaven of sin. But thou, Lord Jesus, who alone art pure of all sin and without stain, grant that every day I may more and more purge out the old leaven.' Again, if perchance the Gospel is read about the sower sowing his seed,³⁸ I pray by myself thus: 'Happy the man
30 who deserves to be good ground; and I beg that he without whose blessing nothing at all is good may by his kindness make good ground of me, who am barren earth.'³⁹ These for examples; it would be tedious to pursue each one. But if the priest happens to be inaudible,⁴⁰ as many German priests are, or I have no opportunity to be near the altar, I generally provide myself with
35 a little book containing the Gospel and Epistle for the day,⁴¹ and then I recite it or read it myself.

Erasmus I understand. But with what meditations do you chiefly spend the time?

- Gaspar** I give thanks to Jesus Christ for his inexpressible love in
40 condescending to redeem mankind by his death, and I pray that he may not let his sacred blood be poured out for me in vain but that with his

body he may always feed my soul, with his blood make my spirit live, so that gradually, by growth in goodness, I may become a worthy member of his mystical body,⁴² the church, and that I may never break that most holy covenant made with his chosen disciples at the Last Supper, through the sharing of the bread and the offering of the chalice, and through the disciples with all who are united by baptism into fellowship with him.⁴³ But if I notice my thoughts straying, I read some psalms⁴⁴ or some other religious text to prevent my mind from wandering.

Erasmus Have you any particular psalms for this purpose?

10 **Gaspar** Yes, but I have not imposed them upon myself in such a way as to hinder me from omitting them if a thought strikes me that might restore my mind more than reciting psalms would.

Erasmus What about fasting?⁴⁵

Gaspar With fasting I have nothing to do. For Jerome taught me that health
15 should not be weakened by fasts until the body has reached its proper, mature strength;⁴⁶ but I haven't yet turned seventeen.⁴⁷ If, however, I feel the need, I lunch and dine more frugally, in order to be the keener for devotions throughout a holy day.

Erasmus Now that I've begun, I'll fish out everything – how do you feel
20 about sermons?⁴⁸

Gaspar Fine. I attend them no less reverently than holy communion. Yet I choose which preachers to hear, because there are some it is profitable not to have heard. If such a one turns up, or if none at all turns up,⁴⁹ I pass the time with Sacred Scripture; I read the Gospel and Epistle with commentary by
25 Chrysostom or Jerome⁵⁰ or any other holy and learned interpreter I happen to meet.⁵¹

Erasmus Yet the living voice⁵² is more effectual.

Gaspar Granted, and I prefer to listen if an acceptable preacher is provided; but I don't think I've lacked a sermon entirely if I've heard Chrysostom or
30 Jerome speaking from their writings.

Erasmus I don't think so either. But how does confession please you?⁵³

Gaspar Very much, for I confess every day.

Erasmus Every day?

Gaspar Yes.

35 **Erasmus** Then you should keep a priest of your own.

Gaspar But I confess to him who alone truly remits sins and who has all power.⁵⁴

Erasmus Who is that?

Gaspar Christ.⁵⁵

40 **Erasmus** You think that's sufficient?⁵⁶

Gaspar It would be quite sufficient for me if it were so for the rulers⁵⁷ of the church and accepted custom.

Erasmus Whom⁵⁸ do you call the rulers of the church?

Gaspar Popes, bishops, apostles.

Erasmus And you include Christ with these?

Gaspar He is indisputably the head⁵⁹ of them all.

5 **Erasmus** And author of the customary confession?⁶⁰

Gaspar Assuredly he is the author of all good,⁶¹ but whether he himself instituted this confession such as the church now uses, I leave to theologians to decide. For me, a simple boy, the authority of my elders is good enough.

This⁶² is certainly the principal confession. Nor is it an easy matter to confess
10 to Christ. No one confesses to him unless he sincerely abhors his own sin.⁶³
If I have committed grievous sin, I declare it before Christ and lament; I cry out, weep, wail, and denounce myself; I entreat his mercy. Nor do I cease until I feel the propensity to sin utterly removed from the depths of my soul and some serenity and gladness (the sign of pardon for sin) to follow. And
15 when occasion offers to approach the sacred table of the body and blood of the Lord, I confess also to a priest,⁶⁴ but briefly and only those things that seem unquestionably to be grave offences⁶⁵ or are of such a kind that I suspect them very strongly to be so. Nor do I straightway regard as a dreadful enormity⁶⁶ a transgression of any and every⁶⁷ human ordinance
20 unless this is accompanied by a malicious contempt. No, I hardly consider it a mortal sin unless malice⁶⁸ – a corrupt will – is joined to it.

Erasmus I commend you for being so religious and yet not superstitious. and here, I think, the proverb has a place: 'Not everything, nor everywhere, nor by everybody.'⁶⁹

25 **Gaspar** I select a priest to whom I can entrust the secrets of the heart.⁷⁰

Erasmus A wise thing to do, for experience proves there are a great many who blab about what they hear in confession. There are some unworthy and shameless priests who demand to know of the person confessing what it would have been better to keep silent about. There are ignorant and dense
30 ones who for sordid gain offer their ear rather than their mind, since they do not distinguish between a wrongdoing and something done rightly; nor are they able to teach, console, or advise. I've often heard, from many persons, that this is so; and I myself have to some extent experienced it.

Gaspar So have I – too much. For that reason I choose a man of some
35 learning, dignity, demonstrated integrity, and a sober tongue.

Erasmus You're fortunate indeed to have begun to grasp these matters so early.

Gaspar Finally, my main concern is to do nothing it would be dangerous to confide to a priest.

40 **Erasmus** Excellent, if you can take that precaution.

Gaspar It's very difficult for us, to be sure, but with Christ's help it is easy. The first requirement is a good will. Mine I renew from time to time,

especially on Sundays. Next, I try my best to avoid bad company and I attach myself to the most irreproachable friends, by whose fellowship I may profit.

Erasmus A good plan, for 'evil communications corrupt good manners.'⁷¹

Gaspar I shun idleness as I do the plague.

- 5 **Erasmus** Not surprising, for there's no wickedness idleness does not teach.⁷² But as men's characters are nowadays, one would have to live by oneself to keep out of bad company.

Gaspar You're not far wrong, since 'the wicked are the majority,' as the Greek sage said.⁷³ But I pick the best from the few. And a virtuous friend

- 10 always makes his comrade better. I shun games that lead to vice, engaging in harmless ones instead. I'm friendly with everybody but intimate only with the good. Whenever I fall in with wicked persons I correct them by a mild reproof or dissemble and put up with them; if I think the reproof won't work, you may be sure I clear out of their company at the first opportunity.

- 15 **Erasmus** Have you never had a strong urge to take the cowl?

Gaspar Never, but I've often been pressed to do so by some who call me from this world, as from a shipwreck, to the haven of monasteries.⁷⁴

Erasmus What do I hear? Were they trying to capture you as a prize?

- Gaspar** They set to work with wonderful ingenuity both on me and my
20 parents.⁷⁵ But I'm resolved not to commit myself to marriage, the priesthood, monasticism – or any other mode of life I can't free myself from afterwards – until I know my own mind very clearly.

Erasmus When will that be?

Gaspar Perhaps never. But nothing will be decided before I'm twenty-eight.⁷⁶

- 25 **Erasmus** Why that?

Gaspar Because I hear so many priests, monks, and husbands everywhere lamenting that they have recklessly cast themselves into bondage.

Erasmus You're careful not to be caught.

Gaspar Meantime I concern myself with three things.

- 30 **Erasmus** What are they?

Gaspar First, to improve in conduct. Second, if I can't do that, to safeguard my innocence and reputation unstained. Finally, to apply myself to literature and other branches of study that will be useful in whatever career I may follow.

- 35 **Erasmus** But do you avoid the poets altogether?⁷⁷

Gaspar Not entirely. The purest of them I read as much as I can. But if I come to anything indecent I skip it, as Ulysses sailed past the Sirens with ears stopped.⁷⁸

- Erasmus** But what kind of study do you go in for mainly? Medicine? Canon
40 law? Civil law? Theology? For languages, literature, and philosophy apply equally to every profession.

Gaspar I've not yet committed myself fully to any; I sample them all, so that I won't be wholly ignorant of any and so that by having tried each, I may choose more confidently the one I'm suited for. Medicine is the surest provision anywhere in the world. Skill in the law opens the door to public office.⁷⁹ Theology would please me best, did not the manners of some theologians and their ill-tempered quarrels with one another disgust me.

Erasmus He who picks his way step by step does not easily fall. Many shun theology these days from fear of wavering in their Catholic faith, since they see there is nothing that is not called into question.⁸⁰

Gaspar As for me, what I read in Sacred Scripture and the creed called the Apostles' I believe with complete confidence,⁸¹ nor do I search further. The rest I leave to theologians to dispute and define if they wish. But if something commonly accepted by the Christian people is not clearly at variance with Sacred Scripture,⁸² I observe it to the extent of not offending anyone.

Erasmus What Thales⁸³ taught you this philosophy?

Gaspar As a young boy I was a member of the household of that worthiest of men, John Colet. Do you know the man?

Erasmus Do I? As well as I know you.

Gaspar It was he who steeped my childhood in lessons of this kind.

Erasmus You won't be jealous if I offer to rival your practice?

Gaspar No, on the contrary you will be dearer to me for this very reason. For you know that close friendship and good will are cemented by common habits.

Erasmus True, but not among rivals for the same civil office when both are bitten by the same bug!

Gaspar Nor among suitors for the same bride when they are equally desperate with love.

Erasmus But joking aside, I'll try to imitate this system of yours.

Gaspar I pray you may meet with every success.

Erasmus Perhaps I'll catch up with you.

Gaspar I hope you overtake me. Meanwhile I won't wait for you but I'll attempt to better my own record every day. But try to beat me if you can.

NOTES

1 *sphaeristerio*; see 'Sport' n13.

2 Cf 'A Fish Diet' 716:39-717:1.

3 Forms of this proverb vary. One medieval version was 'Angelicus iuvenis senibus sathanizat in annis' (Johan Huizinga *The Waning of the Middle Ages* trans F. Hopman [London 1924] 147).

- 4 'Acquire the best knowledge first' (Allen Ep 56:28 / CWE Ep 56:32). In his writings on education and religion Erasmus insists on this rule. On a boy's training in religion see *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (1526) LB V 713E–714D and *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1133–96.
- 5 *numen*. On the conception of God see 'Faith' 423:12–424:13.
- 6 In August 1526 Vives told Erasmus that some readers – he implies that he was one – were displeased by this summary passage because it could not be understood, they thought, by the youthful readers for whom the dialogue was written (Allen Ep 1732:29–39). Erasmus dismisses such objections as foolish and false (Allen Ep 1830:5–10).
- 7 'First in the morning, when thou dost awake, / To God for His grace, thy petition then make.' So Francis Seager's *Schoole of Vertue* (1557) in *The Babees Book* ed F.J. Furnivall EETS original series 32 (London 1868) 337, 2nd ed *Early English Meals and Manners* (London 1931; repr Detroit 1969) 225. To start the day with prayer, both at home and at school, is strongly recommended in *Modus orandi Deum* (1524) LB V 1131E, as in contemporary books on moral duty. It was practically the universal custom in schools.
- 8 This prayer was long used at St Paul's School (Lupton *Life of Colet* 152n). The text is also in *Precationes* LB V 1209C.
- 9 The section on duty to parents in *Explanatio symboli* (1533) LB V 1191D–1193A begins with the same affirmation.
- 10 For a younger and less exemplary boy's going to school see 'School.'
- 11 *Disticha Catonis*, *Breves sententiae* 9. See 'Patterns' n2.
- 12 In a word . . . abundantly.] Added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 13 *Adagia* I x 30
- 14 Luke 2:46–7. When Jesus taught the doctors in the temple, Erasmus says elsewhere, he did not discourse on topics such as squaring the circle or prime matter but on the understanding of Scripture, which is the pathway to eternal life (Paraphrase on Luke LB VII 306E).
- 15 At the Transfiguration of the Lord: Matt 3:16–17, 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35. Over the high master's chair at St Paul's School was a picture of the child Jesus, with the Father saying from above 'Ipsium audite,' an inscription suggested by Erasmus (Allen Ep 1211:352–3 / CWE 8 Ep 1211:383–5). The verse from which it is taken is quoted in the sermon *Concio de puero Iesu*, written for the school by Erasmus (LB V 601D / CWE 29 58; see introduction 89 above).
- 16 This prayer too (*Precationes* LB V 1209D) was used at St Paul's School.
- 17 Favourites of Erasmus as well and, excepting Agnes, subjects of his editorial labours. He readily agreed with a critic about his own preference for Paul; see *Supputatio* (1527) LB IX 663A, and cf 'The Godly Feast' 189:35–6 and n166, 204:14–16, and *Enchiridion* (1503, 1518) LB V 66A / Holborn 135:16–19 / CWE 66 127. On Cyprian and Jerome see 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' nn23–4 and his editions of those Fathers. His lifelong attraction to Jerome is attested by his commentaries on Scripture, editing and translating of the New Testament, editing of Jerome's letters, and his biography of Jerome (in Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 125–90 / CWE 61 15–62). Jerome was a hero to Erasmus, but even Jerome could err (as Erasmus argued, against Colet, that he did in the interpretation of Matthew 26:39; see Epp 108–11 and *De*

taedio Iesu [1503] LB v 1265A–1292A), but even when Jerome was wrong there is more to be learned from him than from some other theologians who are right (*Ratio verae theologiae* [1518] LB v 133E). In *Methodus*, first printed as part of the material introductory to the Greek New Testament (1516), Erasmus declares he would rather be a devout theologian with Jerome than invincible with Scotus (Holborn 162:5–6), but when the sentence appears in *Ratio verae theologiae* Chrysostom replaces Jerome (Holborn 304:14–15 / LB v 137B).

- 18 by his gift] Added in the March 1533 edition
- 19 In the *Precationes* LB v 1202A–B is a prayer *pro docilitate* ‘for a teachable spirit,’ which was used at St Paul’s and other schools.
- 20 *Works and Days* 368–9; see *Adagia* II ii 64. Cf ‘Early to Rise’ 920:6–9.
- 21 Cf *De civilitate* (1530) LB I 1038B, 1041B / CWE 25 281, 286. Lily’s Latin grammar (introduction 89 above and CWE 24 450) includes examples of blessings before meals and graces after meals. See those in ‘The Profane Feast’ 135:20–1, 153:7–21, ‘The Godly Feast’ 183:1–5, 203:1–4, and *Precationes* LB v 1210B–D. The custom is commended in *Modus orandi Deum* LB v 1132A. Many of the prayers in *Precationes* (1535) LB v 1197–1216 are translated by M.M. Phillips in ‘Prayers . . . by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam’ ERSY 8 (1988) 12–34.
- 22 See ‘Sport’ n11.
- 23 On lunch (*prandium*) and dinner (*coena*) see ‘The Godly Feast’ n15.
- 24 *Modus orandi Deum* LB v 1113B. Gaspar’s bedtime prayer paraphrases part of *Precationes* LB v 1200F.
- 25 entirely to him] Editions earlier than March 1533 have ‘and other saints’ after these words.
- 26 *De civilitate* LB I 1043A–B / CWE 25 289
- 27 The proper method of sleeping was a subject to which manuals of health and manners paid serious attention; see, for example, chapter 8 of Andrew Boorde’s *Dyetary* (1542) ed F.J. Furnivall EETS extra series 10 (London 1870; repr Millwood, NY 1973) 244–8. William Vaughan *Directions for Health* (1600) advises, ‘Sleep first on your right side with your mouth open’ (in *The Babees Book* 253, *Early English Meals and Manners* [n7 above] 137). See Erasmus’ *De civilitate* 7 LB I 1043–4 / CWE 25 289.
- 28 *sanctulus*, from Jerome *Apologia adversus Rufinum* 3.7 PL 23 (1883) 484B
- 29 See *De civilitate* 3 LB I 1037D–1038A / CWE 25 279–80 and *De pueris instituendis* LB I 500D / ASD I-2 47:3–8 / CWE 26 318 on behaviour at divine service.
- 30 Luke 18:13
- 31 Matt 5:24
- 32 Cf Matt 18:23–4, 25:14–30; Luke 7:41–3, 16:1–8.
- 33 Or ‘rightly or wrongly,’ *per fas nefasque*. In ancient Rome *nefasti dies* were unlucky days on which no public business was transacted. Cf Livy 6.14.10; Horace *Epodes* 5.87.
- 34 Much the same point is made in *Enchiridion* LB v 30F–31B / CWE 66 70–1. Going to church is vain unless you are a better person when you leave (*De civilitate* LB I 1038A / CWE 25 280).
- 35 *rumino* ‘chew the cud,’ ‘ponder’; see *Adagia* III vii 68.

- 36 On prayer see *Modus orandi Deum* (1524) LB v 1099E–1132E / ASD v-1 111–76; *Precationes* (1524) LB v 1197A–1228c. Whether it should be made silently or vocally was a disputed question. See Allen Ep 964:123n and LB v 1128A–1129B.
- 37 1 Cor 5:7
- 38 Mark 4:3–9
- 39 These two prayers are in *Precationes* LB v 1209D–E.
- 40 Cf Ps 37:14 (Vulg): ‘et sicut mutus non aperiens os suum.’ When opposing Archbishop Cranmer’s proposals for reforming the service in 1547, Bishop Stephen Gardiner stoutly defended the old English custom of taking ‘smale hede what the priest and the clerkes dyd in the chauncell . . . yt was never ment that the people should in dede here the Mattyns or here the Masse, but be present ther and praye themselves in sylence’ (*Letters* 355). But in the pulpit the priest must be a skilled and audible speaker. In the long section on *pronuntiatio* in *Ecclesiastes*, Erasmus has much to say about voice and gestures in preaching (LB v 956B–967A).
- 41 A lectionary
- 42 Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:12, 27; Eph 1:22, 5:23. See ‘Faith’ 429:4–9; *Enchiridion* LB v 45B–46C / CWE 66 94–6.
- 43 Cf *Precationes* LB v 1209F–1210A.
- 44 Erasmus wrote commentaries on eleven psalms between 1515 and 1536; they are collected in LB v 171A–346B, 369A–556E. Some have distinctive titles: that on Ps 15 (14 Vulg) was published as *De puritate tabernaculi sive ecclesiae christianae* (1536), and that on Ps 84 (83 Vulg) as *De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia* (1533). What purported to be, at least in part, a commentary on Ps 29 (28 Vulg) became *De bello Turcico* (1530). In addition Erasmus edited a commentary by Arnobius on the Psalms in 1522 (Ep 1304). See G. Chantraine ‘Erasmie, lecteur des Psaumes’ in *Colloquia Erasmiiana Turonensia* II 691–712.
- 45 Erasmus in his letters often complains of ill health, of his aversion to fish, and of his stomach troubles (for one of many examples see Allen Ep 447:388–409 / CWE Ep 447:424–47). These and even worse ailments, together with his antipathy to what he criticizes as the ‘Judaism’ of ecclesiastical ordinances enjoining fasting, are recurrent themes in his writings. See Ep 1353 and, in the *Colloquies*, ‘The Profane Feast’ 143:15–146:5 and cf ‘The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*’ 1101:1–10, 1107:6–22; ‘The Godly Feast’ 186:23–191:37; and especially ‘A Fish Diet.’
- 46 He may have in mind Jerome Ep 130.11. Elsewhere Jerome commends fasting as pleasing to God (*Adversus Jovinianum* 2.6) but warns in Ep 130.11 that it is not a complete virtue in itself and should be avoided if it induces physical weakness (as it did for Erasmus).
- 47 Gaspar has not *egressus* ‘emerged from,’ completed, his seventeenth year, so he is still sixteen, as Erasmus says in Allen Ep 1301:28–9 / CWE Ep 1301:54–5.
- 48 In ‘Marriage’ 314:29–30 a husband (Thomas More, though he is not named there) regularly examines his young wife on the sermons she hears. On sermons and preaching see also ‘The Well-to-do Beggars’ nn46 and 48, ‘The Abbot and the Learned Lady’ 505:1–2 and n36, and ‘A Fish Diet’ 706:9–19 and n219, 711:7–10 and n249.
- Colet once offended the bishop of London, Richard Fitzjames, by a reference, taken by the bishop as a personal insult, to the habit some preachers had of reading their sermons, a thing *multi frigide faciunt in Anglia* ‘as many do in

England with depressing effect,' Erasmus says (Allen Ep 1211:550-3 / CWE Ep 1211:600-1). Erasmus tells of hearing a Paris theologian extend a discourse on the prodigal son to forty days (*Ratio verae theologiae* LB v 126C-D; the same story turns up many years later in *Ecclesiastes* LB v 1042C-D). St Dominic, it is said, could be heard seven miles away when he preached; but Spanish miles, to be sure, are much shorter than German miles (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 959A).

On preachers and preaching Erasmus has many pages of interest, ranging from satirical thrusts in the *Colloquies* and *Praise of Folly* and observations in his letters (for instance an excellent passage on Vitrier's preaching, Allen Ep 1211:51-70 / CWE Ep 1211:57-76) to his impressive treatise *Ecclesiastes* (1535) LB v 770A-1100C, his last major publication, which he had worked at intermittently for twelve years or longer. This too much neglected book remains not only the best source of information about Erasmus' opinions on the Christian preacher's function and art but a useful source also for his final judgments on the Fathers and on many points of theology. See studies by James Weiss 'Ecclesiastes and Erasmus' ARG 65 (1974) 83-108 and Robert G. Kleinhaus 'Ecclesiastes sive de Ratione Concionandi' in *Essays on the Works of Erasmus* ed Richard L. DeMolen (New Haven and London 1978) 253-65. Kleinhaus' unpublished doctoral dissertation, 'Erasmus' Doctrine of Preaching' (Princeton Theological Seminary 1968), is a study of *Ecclesiastes*. See also John W. O'Malley 'Erasmus and the History of Sacred Rhetoric' ERSY 5 (1985) 1-29.

- 49 Good preachers are scarce nowadays, although there is abundance of bishops, priests, and monks (Allen Ep 1800:223-5 [1527], to King John of Portugal). The Fifth Lateran Council issued a decree *Supernae maiestatis praesidio* to strengthen and regulate preaching (session 11 [1516]; Tanner 1 634-8), but with what effect is not evident.
- 50 Cf 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 332:30-2. To Erasmus, Jerome was supreme among Latin exegetes. See n17 above. For translations of certain homilies by Chrysostom see LB VIII 7A-326F. Lupset's 'In reding the gospels, I wolde you had at hande Chrysostome & Jerom, by whom you might surely be brought to a perfecte vnderstanding of the text' (*An Exhortation to Young Men* in Gee *Lupset* [introduction 88 above] 244-5) is authentic Erasmian advice.
- 51 Cf 'The Godly Feast' n116.
- 52 *viva vox*; *Adagia* 1 ii 17 is a useful comment on this figure. Gaspar, with appropriate modesty, does not presume to offer opinions on interpretations he has met but knows that hearing certain preachers is unprofitable. He has the good sense to be impressed by what he meets in Chrysostom and Jerome.
- 53 Like some other passages in the *Colloquies*, this one on sacramental confession drew objections from readers who, not surprisingly, refused to take them as the opinions of a schoolboy but treated them instead as accurate expressions of the author's beliefs. They were not mistaken, and subsequently Erasmus' utterances on the subject, though consistent, became somewhat more cautious. In *De libero arbitrio* (1524) LB IX 1217D he deprecates unnecessary and disturbing arguments over confession; see also *Hyperaspistes* 1 (1526) LB X 1279B-C. He believed and taught that the sacrament of penance, including confession, is necessary but did not retreat from his judgment that private confession to a priest, however laudable and devout the custom, could not be shown to have been instituted by Christ or the apostles (*Exomologesis* LB v 145A-146C; *Detectio*

praestigiarum LB x 1570A–B). He did not flatly deny the possibility of such origin but had grave doubts about it (Allen Ep 1410:30–4 / CWE Ep 1410:34–9). In his treatise on confession, *Exomologesis* (1524, a few months earlier than *De libero arbitrio*), where he enumerates both disadvantages and benefits of private confession, he speaks of theologians who argue that because confession is such a heavy burden it cannot be of human devising but must have been of dominical origin, a proposition he rejects (LB v 154F–155C).

The passage on confession in this colloquy was promptly denounced as heretical by Baechem (on whom see ‘Rash Vows’ n14). Erasmus defended himself in letters to the theologians of Louvain and others in July 1522 (Allen Epp 1299:54–66, 1301:32–56 / CWE Epp 1299:59–74, 1301:59–95; CWE translates the longer version of Ep 1301) and later (Allen Ep 2037:29–52). In ‘The Usefulness of the *Colloquies* (1526) 1100:29–34 he dismisses attacks on what he writes here about confession as ‘sheer slander,’ says he teaches that confession should be practised ‘as if’ (*quasi*) ordained by Christ, and again urges the choice of a reliable confessor. His consistency can be shown by comparing Gaspar’s words here with Allen Ep 2136:214–20 (1529) and 2853:27–33 (1533).

Colet, Erasmus tells us, strongly approved of secret confession but not of over-anxious and too frequent confession (Allen Ep 1211:489–91 / CWE Ep 1211:533–5). Tyndale thought ‘shrift in the ear is verily a work of Satan’ (*Obedience of a Christian Man* in *Works* I [Ps 42] 263). More, quoting this, says that Luther, ‘Tyndales mayster,’ was no such fool. ‘For Luther all be it he wolde make every man and every woman to, suffycient and meately to serve for a confessor: yet confesseth he that shryfte is very necessary and dothe mych good, and wolde in no wyse have it lefte’ (*Confutation of Tyndale’s Answer* in Yale cwm 8 part 1 89). Luther heartily endorsed the practice of private confession as a cure for distressed consciences but denied that it could be proved from the Scriptures (*De captivitate Babylonica* [1520] WA 6 546:11–12 / LW 36 86).

On the late medieval background to controversies over confession see H.C. Lea *A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church* 3 vols (Philadelphia 1896) and, from a different point of view, Thomas N. Tentler *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton 1977). Allen Ep 2513:393n outlines Erasmus’ involvement with the subject. For analyses of Erasmus’ opinions see John B. Payne *Erasmus: His Theology of the Sacraments* (Richmond, Va 1970) 181–229 and J.-P. Massaut ‘La position “oecuménique” d’Erasmus sur la pénitence’ in *Réforme et humanisme, actes du IV^e colloque [tenu par le] Centre d’histoire de la Réforme et du protestantisme de l’Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier, octobre 1975* ed Jean Boisset (Montpellier 1977) 241–81. On youthful confession and on administration of sacraments to children see R.L. DeMolen ‘Childhood and the Sacraments in the Sixteenth Century’ ARG 66 (1975) 49–71.

- 54 This sentence was included in the Paris faculty of theology’s censure of the *Colloquies* in May 1526. See *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB ix 932C–E.
- 55 Erasmus says (Allen I 11:34–6 and note / CWE Ep 1341A:390–2) that Campester’s bawdlerized edition changed this to ‘a priest.’
- 56 Cf *Enarratio in psalmum xxxviii* (1532) LB v 434C; *Ecclesiastes* LB v 905A.
- 57 *procures*. Defending this sentence against Baechem, Erasmus argues that in fact it is the authority of human – for instance episcopal – ordinances that governs

- confessional practices, and that therefore Gaspar's response is altogether correct (Allen Ep 1300:14–26 / CWE Ep 1300:15–29).
- 58 Erasmus Whom . . . good enough.] Added, probably as a result of Baechem's criticism, in the July–August 1522 edition, except for 'such as the church now uses,' an addition in the March 1533 edition
- 59 *colophon*; *Adagia* II iii 45, and cf III x 82, IV vi 20 (see introductory note CWE 33 392).
- 60 Private (auricular) confession to a priest. Whether auricular confession was of divine origin was not settled definitively until the Council of Trent ruled that the church had always understood that the entire (*integram*) confession of sins was instituted by the Lord (session 14 [1551] Teaching concerning . . . penance and last anointing, chapter 5 and Canons concerning . . . penance, canon 1; Tanner II 705–6, 711). See further Erasmus *Exomologesis* LB V 145A–147C; *De concordia* (1533) LB V 502A–D.
- 61 See 'Faith' 424:22–34, 428:30–7.
- 62 Because the original text did not include the words 'Whom . . . good enough' (see n58 above), 'this' means confession to Christ, alluding to the immediately preceding questions and answers. According to Erasmus, the Dominican Lambertus Campester's expurgated edition of the *Colloquies* ('Patterns' n71) changed the text here to make Gaspar say the 'principal confession' is that which is made to a priest (Allen I 11:34–6 / CWE Ep 1341A:390–2).
- 63 True contrition is the essential though not the sole element of confession for Erasmus; 'confession without contrition is of no use' (*Exomologesis* LB V 147C–148C, 169D).
- 64 Erasmus reminds his critics of this statement (Allen Ep 1299:60–2 / CWE Ep 1299:66–9). The same decree (*Omnis utriusque sexus*) of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) that obligated all Christians to receive the Eucharist annually, at least at Easter, required them likewise to confess all their sins at least once a year to their own parish priest or, by permission of that priest, to another priest (canon 21; Tanner I 245). See Allen Epp 1300:20–2, 1301:52–6 / CWE Epp 1300:22–4, 1301:87–95 (the longer version).
- 65 *crimina*. The obligation to confess all sins annually evidently applied only to mortal sins. All doubt about this was removed by the decision of Trent (see the references in n60 above, chapter 5 and canon 7; Tanner II 706–7, 712).
- 66 dreadful enormity] *piaculum* alone in all editions until March 1533, when 'hoc est enorme crimen' was added. In defending the earlier version in 1531, Erasmus explains that *protinus* 'straightway' and *Imo* 'No' at the beginning of the next sentence emphasize that while transgression of a human ordinance can be a grave offence, it is not thereby mortal sin (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* [1531]; LB IX 1182B–C). Mortal sin is deliberate, wilful violation of God's law.
- On excessive anxiety in self-examination see *Exomologesis* LB V 151B–C, 155A–F.
- 67 Erasmus accused his theological critics in Paris of having omitted the words 'any and every' in quoting him (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 932A–C).
- 68 Since sin, according to Catholic teaching, must be voluntary
- 69 A Greek maxim quoted in Roman law; *Adagia* II iv 16
- Luther had written that one is required to confess only 'manifest' mortal

sins, because it is impossible to know – that is, to remember or recognize – all mortal sins one has ever committed (*Sermon von dem Sakrament der Busse* [1519] WA 2 721:24–722:9 / LW 35 20–1. The argument is expanded in his *Confitendi ratio* [1520] WA 6 162:11–163:23 / LW 39 34–6). This teaching was one of many condemned by the bull *Exsurge Domine* (June 1520) threatening Luther with excommunication (2.8; Kidd *Documents* 76 no 38). Erasmus calls attention to the proposition, naming Luther, in his famous letter of October 1519 to Albert of Brandenburg (Allen Ep 1033:77–80 / CWE Ep 1033:87–90). When defending ‘Youth’ in two letters of July 1522 against Baechem’s criticism, he refers again to this matter. In one he says that Gaspar’s statement that he confesses only those sins which are unquestionably (*certo*) mortal ones or strongly suspected of being such is quite orthodox (Allen Ep 1300:26–8 / CWE Ep 1300:29–31). In the other letter he reminds the theologians of Louvain of Luther’s teaching that it is not necessary to confess *all* mortal sins but only ‘manifest’ mortal sins. Therefore, he says, Gaspar’s words are very different from Luther’s doctrine (Allen Ep 1301:28–32 / CWE Ep 1301:54–9 [the longer version]). That Gaspar says nothing about mortal sins being ‘manifest’ is true enough, but his ‘unquestionably’ (*certo*) makes the effect of his words less different from Luther’s than Erasmus implies. And indeed Erasmus himself, in a much later letter on reform (1533), urging sincerity and avoidance of superstition in confession, makes allowance for the person who confesses only those sins which are ‘manifestly’ (*manifesto*) mortal sins (Allen Ep 2853:27–33). Whatever his disclaimers in differences over texts he was concerned to defend, his conviction that ‘mortal’ sins too often meant offences against human rather than divine law is unmistakable. See further ‘A Fish Diet’ 688:27–703:25. When confessing, one must always distinguish between sins against God’s commandments and those against human statutes. On this, Luther (as in *Confitendi ratio* WA 6 164:29–31 / LW 39 34–6) and Erasmus agreed. Although Erasmus was familiar with Luther’s teachings, he was reticent and evasive about how much or how many of Luther’s writings he had read. He preferred to say he had ‘sampled’ (*degustavit*) rather than read them. On this subject see Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 13–15, 18, 24; pages 3–47 review Erasmus’ reactions to Luther and Lutheranism to March 1524.

- 70 In *Exomologesis* LB V 153C–156E, 168A–170C and *Lingua* (1525) LB IV 686D–687E / ASD IV-1A 75:599–76:657 / CWE 29 307–9 Erasmus gives some examples of good and bad confessors. He praises Jean Vitrier, of whom he wrote a memoir, for his trustworthiness and tact as confessor (Allen Ep 1211:122–35 / CWE Ep 1211:134–147). Folly accuses mendicants of disclosing, when drunk, what they had heard in confession, only without naming names (*Moriae encomium* LB IV 474B / ASD IV-3 162:181–3 / CWE 27 132). The conscienceless mercenary in ‘Military Affairs’ (58:37–40) chooses an unworthy priest as confessor. Some reckless statements by Diego de Uceda of Córdoba in February 1528 on confession and images, which included specific recommendation of ‘Youth’ on confession, resulted in his delation to the Inquisition of Toledo and subsequent arrest. After examination and torture he confessed and abjured his ‘Lutheranism’ (Bataillon *Erasmus et l’Espagne* 468–9). The dialogue was translated anonymously into Spanish as early as 1528. Juan de Valdés borrowed from it, as from other colloquies, in his *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* (1529).

As a priest Erasmus must have heard confessions. In the letter 'to the pious reader' that precedes the Paraphrase on Matthew (LB VII **3 verso) he comments on how ignorant of doctrine and forgetful of their baptismal vows many people are – people in their fifties, for instance – 'as we have often noticed in conversation or in secret confession.' See also *Exomologesis* LB V 159A–B.

In a letter of August 1533 to an unnamed person or group in a place where the Lutherans or Zwinglians evidently had followers or power, or both, Erasmus repeats the counsels of this colloquy: even those who deny that confession is part of the sacrament of penance and instituted by Christ should practise it as salutary, ancient, and approved by the consensus of many centuries, until the church decrees otherwise; confession must be sincere and free of superstition; it should be made to a good priest, to whom only mortal sins should be confessed (Allen Ep 2853:27–33).

- 71 Menander *Sententiae* 808, quoted by Paul in 1 Cor 15:33. Other possible sources are a fragment of Menander and a line from Euripides. See *Adagia* I x 74 introductory note CWE 32 384. In his comment on the adage, Erasmus tells of Colet's fondness for saying that our daily converse shows us as we are.
- 72 See Horace *Satires* 2.3.15. The youthful prince Edward, later Edward VI of England, quoted the first sentence and paraphrased the second in a note to his tutor (*Literary Remains of King Edward the Sixth* ed J.G. Nichols, 2 vols [London 1857; repr New York 1963] I 19–20). See introduction 90 above.
- 73 Bias, one of the seven sages; see Diogenes Laertius 1.87.
- 74 Cf Erasmus' recollection of the pressure put upon him to enter the Augustinian priory of Steyn (Allen Ep 447:260–3 / CWE Ep 447:284–7). The metaphor is not uncommon in writings on monastic vocation. *De contemptu mundi* (1521, but written some thirty years earlier) has a comparable passage (LB V 1242C / ASD V-1 44:119–22 / CWE 66 138).
- 75 Solicitation of this kind is a theme linking two colloquies, 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' and 'The Repentant Girl.'
- 76 Due deliberation before committing oneself irrevocably to a mode of life is treated both shrewdly and amusingly in 'The Old Men's Chat,' seriously in 'The Soldier and the Carthusian,' where twenty-eight is the age mentioned (330:25–8 and n4), and 'The Funeral' (778:32–4). The perils of an immature decision are presented in 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' and 'The Repentant Girl.' In Allen Ep 858:491–5 / CWE Ep 858:521–5, Erasmus expresses the wish that no one should be finally committed to the life of a religious order, bound by vows, until thirty. When rejecting the admonition of the prior that he return to Steyn (1514), Erasmus imagines someone arguing that after his probationary year there he (Erasmus) was mature enough to decide whether to stay. Nonsense, he retorts: 'As if one could require a youth of sixteen, with a largely bookish upbringing, to know himself – a considerable accomplishment even for an old man – or to learn, in a single year, what many greybeards have not yet grasped!' (Allen Ep 296:34–7 / CWE Ep 296:35–8). In the Augustinian order, as in others, a novice had to complete his sixteenth year before making profession. The Council of Trent made this standard obligatory in all religious orders (session 25 [1563] Decree on regulars and nuns, chapter 15; Tanner II 781). Commands imposed on English monasteries in the visitation by Cromwell's commissioners in 1535–6 included one, 'based on Erasmian

- teaching,' that no man under twenty-four be professed (Knowles ROE III 277). Erasmus' advice had many precedents; see Richard M. Douglas 'Talent and Vocation in Humanist and Protestant Thought' in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe* ed Theodore K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (Princeton 1969) 261–98.
- 77 Colet's statutes for St Paul's School speak of his intent that in learning 'good literature both Latin and Greek' the pupils should read Christian as well as pagan authors. The problem of indecency and paganism in school texts was troublesome to other educators too. See CWE 23 xxx–xxxi on Colet; also Erasmus' *Antibarbari* on the larger question of pagan culture in a Christian society.
- 78 Homer *Odyssey* 12:165–200
- 79 The *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (1526) LB V 661E agrees that medicine is best; law is second.
- 80 The Paris faculty of theology condemned this sentence as erroneous. Erasmus in reply pointed out that Gaspar says some, not all, theologians have bad manners. Of 'Many shun theology these days . . . called into question' he says the speaker is simply stating this as a fact, not attacking scholastic disputations. There are so many conflicts among theologians that many people fear that their own faith becomes less certain (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 932E–933B); this is the reason, he adds, for Gaspar's next words.
- 81 For 'what is at variance with Scripture is not of Christ' (*Explanatio symboli* LB V 1171D). The Apostles' Creed is expounded briefly in the colloquy 'Faith' (1524) and more elaborately in *Explanatio symboli* (1533) LB V 1133A–1196E / ASD V-1 205–392. In the colloquy Erasmus implies very plainly that accommodation between Catholics and Lutherans could, and should, have been reached on the basis of their common acceptance of that creed.
- 82 Reading, pondering, and following Scripture is stressed in all of Erasmus' writings on religion. See especially *Enchiridion*, *Paraclesis*, introductions to the Greek New Testament and the Paraphrases, and, in the *Colloquies*, 'The Godly Feast.'
- Colet, unquestionably, would have endorsed these lines on biblical study. The advice given by the former St Paul's pupil Lupset echoes both Colet and Erasmus: hold fast to Scripture and leave the rest to the learned (Gee *Lupset* [introduction 88 above] 244).
- 83 A paragon of wisdom; see *Adagia* III vii 26.

HUNTING

Venatio

First printed in the March 1522 edition. Lawrence appears also in 'Sport.'

More and Erasmus both disliked hunting. More thought it foolishness (*Utopia* Yale CWM 4 171, 457), not the usual opinion in his England. Erasmus, who has a fine passage on the subject in *Moriae encomium*, thought it worse than mere foolishness (LB IV 441-442A-B / ASD IV-3 118:915-120:926 / CWE 27 112-13). On other sixteenth-century criticism of hunting see Claus Uhlig, "'The Sobbing Deer': As You Like it, II.i.21-66 and the Historical Context' in *Renaissance Drama* 3 (1970) 79-109. On hunting by clergy see 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' n7.

PAUL, THOMAS, VINCENT, LAWRENCE, BARTHOLD

Paul 'Everyone to his taste.'¹ I'm for hunting.

Thomas I like it too, but where are the dogs? Where the spears? Where the
5 nets?

Paul Never mind boars, bears, stags, and foxes; we'll trap rabbits.

Vincent But I'll snare locusts. I'll trap crickets.

Lawrence I'll catch frogs.

Barthold I'll hunt butterflies.

10 **Lawrence** It's hard to catch flying creatures.²

Barthold Hard but glorious³ – unless you consider it more glorious to hunt earthworms or snails because they lack wings.

Lawrence I prefer to catch fish. I've a fine hook.

Barthold But what will you use for bait?

15 **Lawrence** There's plenty of earthworms everywhere.

Barthold Yes, if they please to come up out of the ground for you.

Lawrence But I'll soon arrange it that many myriads spring forth.

Barthold How? By magic spells?

20 **Lawrence** You'll see the art. Fill this bucket with water. Put in it these broken green walnut husks. Pour this water on the ground. Now watch it a little while. See them coming out?

Barthold Wonderful! Thus, I suppose, did armed men once spring up from serpents' teeth sown in the ground.⁴ But many fish have too delicate and tender palates to be caught with such common bait.

25 **Lawrence** I know a certain kind of insect I often take those with.



Hunting the stag

Drawing by Hans Holbein the Younger in the margin of a copy of the 1515 Froben edition of *Moriae encomium* (fol J3 verso)
 Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kupferstichkabinett

Barthold You see if you can fool the fish; I'll deal with the frogs.

Lawrence How? With a net?

Barthold No, a bow.

Lawrence A new way to fish!

5 **Barthold** But it's fun. You'll see and you'll agree.

Vincent What if we two should play the finger game?⁵

Paul A lazy, loutish sort of game, more suitable to those sitting by a fireside than to those active in field sports.

Vincent Suppose we play nuts?⁶

10 **Paul** Let's leave nuts to small fry. We're too grown up.⁷

Vincent And yet we're still only boys.

Paul But ones who are fit for playing nuts are the same ones fit for riding a broomstick.⁸

Vincent Name the kind of sport, then; I'll follow your lead.

15 **Paul** And I'll be ready for anything.⁹

NOTES

1 Virgil *Eclogues* 2.65

2 A proverbial expression used by Aristotle, as Erasmus reminds us in *Adagia* I ix 21; cf III iii 44.

3 On the classical sources (mainly Platonic) of this aphorism, see *Adagia* II i 12.

4 By Cadmus (Ovid *Metamorphoses* 3.1–130)

5 A popular Italian amusement (*mora, morra*) for children and a form of gambling for adults since antiquity; it is mentioned also in 'The Poetic Feast' 394:34. The object was to be the quickest in guessing the number of fingers raised by the players. 'With whom you flash fingers even in the dark' was a proverbial description of a person of unquestioned honesty (Cicero *De officiis* 3.19.77); *Adagia* I viii 23. See Jerome Carcopino *Daily Life in Ancient Rome* ed H.T. Rowell, trans E.O. Lorimer (1941; repr New Haven 1947) 251.

6 From classical antiquity 'nuts' was the name for a variety of games; precisely which one Erasmus has in mind here is uncertain. In one game a player tries to hit a nut on the end of a string against one held by an opponent. In what was called in England 'cobnuts' a cob or nut is pitched at heaps of four nuts, three on the bottom and one on the top of each heap; the pitcher gets the nuts he knocks down. This is the game Erasmus seems to mean in his commentary on the pseudo-Ovidian poem *Nux* (LB I 1202B–C / ASD I-1 164:9–13 / CWE 29 151–2). For other allusions see 'A Feast of Many Courses' 804:12, 'Knucklebones' 894:2, and his poem 'on the troubles of old age' CWE 85–6 16:89, 17, 425–6 no 2 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 286 no 83:89–90.

7 Cf *Adagia* I v 35: *Nuces relinquere*, an expression for putting away childish things.

8 *equitare in arundine longa* (Horace *Satires* 2.3.248)

- 9 *omnium horarum homo*; *Adagia* 1 iii 86. The phrase is familiar to English readers because it was applied to Thomas More, first (1511) in the preface to *Moriae encomium* (Allen Ep 222:21) and then translated as 'a man for all seasons' in Robert Whittinton's *Vulgaria* (1520) ed Beatrice White EETS original series 187 (London 1932) 64. See R.S. Sylvester "'The Man for All Seasons'" Again: Robert Whittington's Verses to Sir Thomas More' *Huntington Library Quarterly* 26 (1962-3) 147-54.

OFF TO SCHOOL

Euntes in ludum literarium

First printed in the March 1522 edition.

The speakers are grammar-school boys, though perhaps less exemplary ones than Gaspar in 'Youth.' Andrew must be younger than the others, since he is still learning the Greek and Latin alphabets.

The allusion to dictation in the second scene reminds us that taking down lessons dictated by the master and then memorizing them was still the normal method of learning in schools. By the date of this colloquy printing had made textbooks sufficiently plentiful and fairly cheap, but taking dictation, memorizing the material (or much of it), and reciting it continued to be standard procedure in elementary and grammar schools, though Erasmus stressed comprehension more than memorizing. Flogging too remained a 'principle' of sound education, despite denunciation of it by Erasmus and some other humanist educators.

Authentic pictures of daily life in English grammar schools of the period can be found in *vulgaria* of John Stanbridge (1508) and Robert Whittinton (1520), both ed Beatrice White in EETS original series 187 (London 1932), and of William Horman (1519), ed M.R. James for the Roxburghe Club (Oxford 1926); *A Fifteenth Century School Book* (c 1500) ed William Nelson (Oxford 1956); and Nicholas Orme 'An Early-Tudor Oxford Schoolbook' *Renaissance Quarterly* 34 (1981) 11-39 (additional texts from the same source as Nelson's). Orme's *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London 1973) and Joan Simon's *Education and Society in Tudor England* (Cambridge 1966) are important studies. For a sketch of Tudor schools' organization and work see Craig R. Thompson *Schools in Tudor England* (Folger Shakespeare Library 1958; repr 1979). W.H. Woodward's *Erasmus concerning Education* (1904) was reprinted in 1964. Allen *Age of Erasmus* is still valuable. Although Erasmus does not have English schools particularly in mind in these dialogues, most of what is said here or in his educational treatises applies to English and continental schools alike. *De copia* and *De ratione studii* in CWE 24 are examples. A letter advising a boy on his studies, a brief explanation of how to go over a lesson, and a few lines on studying alone were printed with early editions of the *Colloquia*; see n3 below and the introductions to this volume xxiv and to 'Patterns' 5-6. Erasmus himself never taught boys in a classroom, but he had had private pupils since his Paris days. He understood the nature of boys, knew what effective pedagogy was, and left a strong impression on his pupils.

SYLVIUS, JOHN

Sylvius Why are you running so, John?

John Why does a rabbit run to save his skin, as they say?¹

5 **Sylvius** What's the point of that proverb?

John That unless I'm there before roll's called I'll get a hiding.

Sylvius Not the slightest danger on that score. It's just past five.² Look at the clock; the hand hasn't yet reached the point dividing hour from hour.

John But I don't trust clocks much. They sometimes lie.

10 **Sylvius** But trust me. I've just heard the sound of the bell.

John What did it say?

Sylvius That it's five o'clock.

John But there's something else I'm even more afraid of. I have to memorize yesterday's lesson,³ a fairly long one. I fear I can't do it.

15 **Sylvius** That's a common danger you describe, for I hardly know the lesson well enough myself.

John And you're familiar with the master's severity.⁴ To him every fault is a capital crime. He no more spares our backsides than if they were bullhide.

Sylvius But he won't be at school.

20 **John** Then what substitute has he appointed?

Sylvius Cornelius.

John That goggle-eyes? Woe to our behinds! He's worse than Orbilius⁵ when it comes to flogging.

25 **Sylvius** True, and therefore I've often prayed he'd get paralysed in the arm.⁶

John It's not right to curse the master. Instead we ought to be careful not to fall into the tyrant's clutches.

Sylvius Let's take turns repeating the lesson, one reciting and the other looking at the book.

30 **John** A good idea.

Sylvius See that you keep your wits about you, for fear blocks the memory.

John I could easily lay aside my fright if there were no danger. But who could be free from anxiety in such extreme peril?

Sylvius Admitted; but it's not a matter of your head but your tail.

35

Another

CORNELIUS, ANDREW

40 **Cornelius** You form letters skilfully, to be sure, but your paper blots. The paper's a little damp and the ink runs.

Andrew I beg you to make this pen ready for me.

Cornelius I've no penknife.⁷

Andrew Here's one.

Cornelius Pooh! How blunt!

Andrew Here, take the whetstone.

- 5 **Cornelius** What do you like to write with, a fairly hard point or a softer one?

Andrew Suit it to your hand.

Cornelius I'm used to a softer one.

Andrew Please write down the letters of the alphabet in order for me.

- 10 **Cornelius** Greek or Latin?⁸

Andrew Latin first. I'll try to copy them.

Cornelius Give me some paper.

Andrew Here.

Cornelius But my ink's too thin. It's had water added to it again and again.

- 15 **Andrew** My rag's completely dried up.

Cornelius Blow your nose on it, unless you prefer to piss on it.

Andrew Oh, no, I'll borrow one somewhere.

Cornelius Better to have one at home than to ask for a loan.

Andrew What's a student without a pen and ink?

- 20 **Cornelius** What a soldier is without shield and sword.

Andrew If only I had as speedy fingers! I simply can't keep up with the dictation by my writing.⁹

Cornelius Let your first care be to write well,¹⁰ next, to write rapidly. 'It's rapid enough if done well enough.'¹¹

- 25 **Andrew** Fine, but sing that song, 'rapid enough if well enough' to the master when he dictates!

NOTES

1 *Adagia* II i 80: *Lepus pro carnibus* (or *Lepus pro carnibus currit*), a proverb about a frightened, helpless creature in extreme danger. Some reprints of the text, including LB I 654A, read *canibus* 'dogs' instead of *carnibus*.

2 Many schools in Erasmus' time began the day at six in summer (some even at five), seven in winter, with an hour off at eleven and then school again until five or six in the afternoon. At Eton in 1530, where the boys came to school at six in the morning, they had no breakfast until nine (breakfast being still something of an indulgence for school and university students in the sixteenth century). At King's School, Canterbury (1541), pupils not only began the day at six but returned for an hour in the evening. For St Paul's, the English school Erasmus knew best, Colet's statutes of 1518 ordained that the hours be from seven to five, with two hours off between eleven and one (Lupton *Life of Colet* 277). Some schools allowed a fifteen-minute break for relaxation in mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

- 3 Erasmus expected pupils to memorize lessons, but only after they understood them sufficiently. Such understanding required several readings of the text: for the sense of the whole, for points of grammar and syntax and meanings of words, for the rhetorical qualities, for the moral meanings. This kind of exercise should precede attempts to learn the text by heart and is a far more fruitful discipline than a tedious effort to memorize something before it is understood; when it has been studied in the way Erasmus recommends, one will know it practically by heart anyway. His explanation of his method and arguments for it are stated briefly in *Quis sit modus repetendae lectionis* 'The Method of Going Over a Lesson' (c 1497). This appeared first in the *Lucubrationum* (Paris 1514) of Gervasius Amoënus, who in 1506 had been a servant-pupil of Erasmus in Paris. See Craig R. Thompson 'Erasmus' Translation of Lucian's *Longaevi*' *Classical Philology* 35 (1940) 407–8. It was then printed in the February 1519 and other Froben editions of *Colloquiorum familiarum formulae* issued earlier than July–August 1522, and in *De conscribendis epistolis*. For the text see LB I 447F–448E / ASD I-2 496:5–498:20 / ASD I-3 119–20 / translation in CWE 25:194–5. In some respects *Quis sit modus repetendae lectionis* is a companion-piece to Ep 56, which was included in the first edition of the *Colloquies* (November 1518); see the introduction to 'Patterns.' On these works see Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* 1 512–18.
- 4 The schoolboy in *A Fifteenth Century School Book* laments that 'we yonge grammaryons most labor with all oure myght to please oure maister lest he be angry and avenge his anger upon us' (29). Thomas More's verses on 'hateful books' (*English Works* I 332–3) voice a universal emotion:

But would to god these hatefull bookes all,
 Were in a fyre brent to poudre small.
 Than myght I lede my lyfe alwayes in play:
 Which lyfe god sende me to myne endyng day.
- 5 The harsh master immortalized by Horace *Epistles* 2.1.71. *De pueris instituendis* has a long passage, as convincing as it is eloquent, in which Erasmus denounces the savagery and senselessness of frequent or excessive corporal punishment (LB I 504D–508D / ASD I-2 55:10–63:14 / CWE 26 325–33). The worse a master's teaching and the more ignorant he is, the more he resorts to beating (LB I 505A / ASD I-2 56:19–20 / CWE 26 326). Flogging of pupils occurred in universities as well as schools, but usually for infractions of discipline rather than lack of progress in study. Cf 'A Fish Diet' n294.
- 6 'Yff ther be eny of my felows that love not my maister, I confesse that I am on' (*A Fifteenth Century School Book* 30). The same boy regrets that the master has recovered from the agonies of toothache, but he is rebuked by a schoolmate for such uncharitable feelings (29). In Whittinton's *Vulgaria* 102 a boy who has been beaten by the master vows that 'If ever I be a man I wyll revenge his malyce' (see Thompson *Schools in Tudor England* 41).
- 7 *gladiolus scriptorius*. Pupils brought with them knives to cut pens. For contemporary comments on paper, knives, pens, and ink in schoolwork see Horman's *Vulgaria* 122–6 and Vives' *Latinae linguae exercitatio* 6 (*Scriptio*) trans Foster Watson in *Tudor School-boy Life: The Dialogues of Juan Luis Vives* (London 1908; repr 1970) 65–79.
- 8 Sir Thomas Elyot in *The Governour* (1531) 1.10 advised that Latin and Greek be taken up at the same time, when a boy is seven, or else Greek should come first,

but ordinarily schools postponed Greek for several years. The main business of a grammar school was Latin; 'grammar' still meant Latin grammar. See the introduction to this volume xix and *CWE* 23 xl–xlvi.

- 9 A difficulty for university students as well as schoolboys. In 1355 the faculty of arts at Paris decided that lecturing rapidly was better than lecturing slowly, whether those who took notes could keep up with the speaker or not, and decreed that all lecturers should behave accordingly (Thorndike *University Records* 237).
- 10 'Wrytte not to shorte nor too rasshely: bycause that thou woldest shortly make an ende' (Horman *Vulgaria* 125).
- 11 In *Adagia* II i 1: *Festina lente* (LB II 407B) Erasmus quotes this Catonian dictum from Jerome Ep 66.9.

[ADDITIONAL FORMULAE]

This section, which briefly resumes the series of *formulae* before continuing the dialogues, was first printed in the November 1518 edition, but the text received many minor revisions and some additions in the 1519 and 1522 editions. See the introductions to 'Patterns' and to 'The Profane Feast.' At 134:4 these texts become what was later called 'The Profane Feast.'

EXPRESSING THANKS¹

PETER, CHRISTIAN, AUGUSTINE

Peter You've won my gratitude by writing from time to time.² I'm grateful
5 to you for having written to me quite frequently. I love you for not thinking
it beneath you to send me a letter from time to time. I'm grateful that you've
visited me by frequent letters. I thank you who have loaded me with bundles
of letters. You have my best thanks for sometimes rousing me by writing.³
You've pleased me very much by honouring me with your letter. I'm obliged
10 to you for your very kind letter to me. I consider it a great favour that you
haven't been reluctant to write to me.

Answer

Christian On the contrary, I should apologize for my impudence, I who
15 did not hesitate to annoy with my wretched scribbling a man so busy and
learned as you. I acknowledge your accustomed kindness in treating my
effrontery with indulgence. I was afraid your failure to reply meant that my
letters had offended you somewhat. You owe me no thanks; I am more than
satisfied if you've taken my earnestness in good part.

20

ASKING FOR NEWS

Peter No news from home? Haven't you received any news from our
friends? What news? Do you bring any news at all? No news brought?
25 There's no news from home announced?

Answer

Christian Yes, plenty of news but nothing true. Enough news, yes, but
nothing new. Plenty of news, but nothing certain. No little news, but
30 not much truth. No news comes. I've simply received no news. Nothing
for certain; something by way of news. A good many rumours are

brought, but they're not reliable. Rumour, mostly, but no news, nothing established. If you like fiction, I bring whole cartloads of lies. I bring fables by the bushel; I bring so many lies one ship could scarcely carry them.⁴

5 **Peter** Unburden yourself as quickly as possible, lest you sink under so heavy a load.

Christian I've nothing but what are bandied about in barbershops, carriages, and ships.

10

HAVE YOU RECEIVED A LETTER?

Peter Have you received no letter? You haven't received a letter from home? No letter was delivered to you? You've had nothing in writing? You've received no epistles? You've received no letter from your favourite friends?

15 Not a single letter flown this way from France?

Answer

Christian I've received no letter. I haven't received the slightest sign of a letter. Not even the least little letter comes. Nobody writes to me. I don't
20 get even a word from anybody. For a long time now I've received as many letters as you see in my eye. I'd rather have money than a letter, to be sure. I'd rather accept silver than letters. I'd prefer to receive coins than notes. I don't care about a letter if only some silver comes. In fact I prefer to have money paid out to me than be written to.

25

I BELIEVE IT

Peter I readily believe it. It's not hard to believe. That's very easy to believe. Who wouldn't believe you in that? Whoever disbelieved you in that would
30 be very sceptical. Certainly I trust you. You convince me of this matter easily. I believe you even if you don't swear it. You say something probable. Yet a letter brings some comfort. But I'd prefer either to neither.

USEFULNESS

35

Christian What good's a letter without money? Just what purpose does an empty letter serve? What value has it? What good does an empty letter bring, do, serve, afford? Whom does a letter without money please? To whom is it acceptable? What profit does an empty letter bring? What good's an idle
40 letter? Of what help is it? For what use? What end does it serve? What does it bring of importance? What do useless, empty letters matter?

*Answer*⁵

Peter Useful, suitable, convenient for cleaning your backside with. They're serviceable for cleaning your buttocks. If you don't know their use, they're good for cleaning your behind. For wiping your buttocks. For cleaning your
 5 rear. They're good for cleaning that part of the body which befouls itself from time to time. They're good to cover mackerel with. They're convenient for wrapping spices in.⁶

– Well, how are your friends? How's your wife doing?

10 **Christian** Quite well; I left her with her mother, and pregnant too.

WISHING WELL

Peter Good luck to you and her both: to you because you're going to be a
 15 father, to her because she'll be a mother. God be with you. I hope and pray you may both be prosperous and happy.⁷ I beseech, I entreat all the heavenly powers that she may safely produce offspring worthy of you both and make you the parent of a fine child. I commend you for having proved yourself a man. I rejoice that you've proved yourself a man. You've shown you're a
 20 cock but not one of Cybele;⁸ go, I deem you a man.⁹

Christian You're joking, and after your fashion. Well, well, you may say anything you please in my presence. – I hear you made a visit home lately.

Peter So I did, for I had been away a little too long. I couldn't stand homesickness that lasted so long. I couldn't forgo the sight of my parents
 25 any longer. Prolonged desire for my friends tormented me.

Christian You behaved dutifully. You're human to have those feelings, for we're all swayed by marvellous affection for the land that bore and nurtured us. And:

30 By its own charm our native land commands,
 And keeps us ever mindful of her claims.¹⁰

Tell me, I beg you, how did you find things there?

35 ALL'S NEW

Peter There's nothing that's not new. Everything's changed. Every single thing new. All things are new. See how suddenly time changes human affairs! I thought I was entering a different world. I'd been away scarcely
 40 ten years and I marvelled at everything, just like Epimenides the prince of dreamers;¹¹ I'm hardly awake yet.

Christian What story's that? What's that story?

Peter I'll tell you if you have the time.

Christian Nothing will please me more.

Peter Then have a cushioned chair brought for me.

5 **Christian** A good suggestion, for you'll tell lies better when sitting down.

Peter Historians tell of a certain Cretan, Epimenides, who went by himself outside the city to take a walk. A sudden shower forcing him to seek shelter in a cave, he fell asleep and remained asleep for forty-seven whole years.¹²

10

I DON'T BELIEVE IT

Christian What's this you're telling me? Incredible! What you say is implausible. You are recounting a dream. To me it's impossible. What you say is extraordinary. Aren't you ashamed of such barefaced nonsense? A

15 story fit to be added to Lucian's *True History*!¹³

Peter No, no; I tell a tale related by the most respectable authors – unless perchance Aulus Gellius seems untrustworthy to you.¹⁴

Christian Why, his writings are all Sibylline oracles to me.¹⁵

Peter Just what do you think a theologian – as Epimenides was said to be –
20 dreamt about for so many years?

Christian I can't wait to hear.

Answer

Peter What else than what Scotus and men of his ilk produced later on?

25 But for Epimenides there was a happy ending: *he* finally came to his senses. Many theologians never wake up from their dreams.¹⁶

Christian Now, now – just like a poet! But go on with your lying.

Peter Well, so Epimenides, awake at last, comes out of the cave, looks around, sees everything changed – woods, banks, rivers, trees, fields – in
30 short, everything was new. He approaches the city, makes inquiries, stays there awhile, neither knows anyone nor is recognized by anyone. Fashions are different; looks have changed; speech and manners are changed. I'm not surprised, either, that that happened to Epimenides after so many years when the same thing nearly happened to me, who have been away only a
35 few.

Christian What about your parents? Are they living?

Peter Both are living and tolerably well, though weakened by old age, illness, and last of all by the catastrophe of wars.

Christian This is the human comedy. This is the inevitable law of the Fates.

40 **Peter** Dining at home today?

Christian I'm going out to dinner. I must go out to dinner.

Peter At whose house?

Christian At my father-in-law's. At my son-in-law's. At my daughter-in-law's. At the home of a connection by marriage. Those related by ties of marriage, not of blood, are said to be 'connections by marriage.'

5 **Peter** Then what terms are used for connections by marriage?¹⁷

Christian 'Husband' and 'wife' are the familiar ones. 'Father-in-law' is my wife's father.

'Son-in-law,' my daughter's husband.

'Mother-in-law,' my wife's mother.

10 'Daughter-in-law,' my son's wife. 'Brother-in-law' [*levir*],¹⁸ husband's brother. *Levir* is a word used by a wife, as Helen called Hector 'brother-in-law' because she was married to Paris.

'Sister-in-law' [*fratria*], my brother's wife.

'Sister-in-law' [*glos*], husband's sister.

15 'Stepfather,' my mother's husband.

'Stepmother,' my father's wife.

'Stepson,' son of wife or husband.

'Stepdaughter,' daughter of either one.

'Rival,' man who loves the same woman.

20 'Mistress' [*pellex*],¹⁹ woman who loves the same man. Thraso is the rival [*rivalis*] of Phaedria, and Europa the *pellex* when compared with Juno.

HAVE LUNCH WITH ME TOMORROW

25 **Peter** Thanks. Excellent! Therefore I invite you to dinner tomorrow. Therefore I ask you to dine with me tomorrow. Therefore I beg you to lunch with me tomorrow. Therefore I want you as my guest tomorrow.

I'm Afraid I Can't

30 **Christian** But I fear it won't be possible. I'm afraid I can't. I'll come if I can. But I'm afraid I can't.

WHY?

35 **Peter** Why can't you? Why so? Why thus? For what reason? How come? What's the excuse? What's to prevent you?

I Must Be at Home

40 **Christian** I have to stay at home then. It's necessary for me to be at home at night. Certainly I can't go out then. I shan't be free to go out anywhere tomorrow. I can't get excused from lunch. I expect some guests myself on

that day. Some old friends have agreed to dine at our house on that evening. I have to attend to guests myself on that evening; otherwise I'd gladly come. Except for that, I'd do it not unwillingly. Were it not for that, I'd give you no trouble. If I could come I wouldn't ask to be excused. I wouldn't let myself
 5 be asked twice if I could come. Don't entreat me; I'd come even without an invitation if I possibly could. I'd accommodate you without reluctance if I could. It's useless for you to ask someone who isn't free; it would be useless to ask a second time if he were free. As now I can't do what I'd very much like to do, it would be needless then to ask one who'd be willing enough.

- 10 **Peter** You must assuredly come to my place the day after tomorrow. At least you must come to dinner the day after tomorrow. On the fourth day hence you will please be my guest. On Thursday next you can't escape coming.

I Can't Promise

- 15 **Christian** I can't promise. I can't swear to it. I'm unable to promise for certain. I'll come when it will seem most convenient for us both.

YOU SHOULD NAME A DAY

- 20 **Peter** Then I want you to appoint a day on which you'll dine with me. Then it's necessary for you to designate a day. Then you must promise a day. I want a specific day determined, prescribed, reserved, arranged. Promise for a certain day. I'd like you to name the day.

I Don't Want You to Know in Advance

- 25 **Christian** For my part, I'm not accustomed to naming the day for friends. Usually²⁰ I 'name the day' for people I don't get along with. I wouldn't want you to know beforehand. I don't want you to know ahead of time. I'll burst in on you unexpectedly. I'll take you unawares. I'll take you by surprise.
 30 I'll burst in on you when you least suspect it. I'll be there when I'm not expected. I'll turn up when you're not looking for me. I'll come a self-invited and unlooked-for guest.

I WANT TO KNOW IN ADVANCE

- 35 **Peter** I want to know two days ahead of time. I wish to be informed two days before. Warn me two days before you come. Let me know more definitely two days before.

- Christian** If you insist, I'll name a sybaritic day, to allow plenty of time to
 40 get ready.

Peter What sort of word is this?

Christian The Sybarites²¹ used to invite guests for the next year, in order that both sides might make suitable preparations.

Peter Away with the Sybarites and their troublesome guests! I'm inviting an old comrade, not a satrap.

5

YOU WISH IT TO YOUR OWN LOSS

Christian Surely to your own detriment. To your own loss, surely. You wish this to your own injury. You ask this to your own disadvantage.

10 **Peter** Why so? For what reason?

Christian I'll arrive prepared. I'll come armed. I'll come ready for you. I'll arrive famished; see that you fill the vulture. I'll prepare my belly and sharpen my teeth; do you see by what means you can glut the wolf.

Peter Come now, I challenge you to this contest. Come now, do your utmost,
15 your best, whatever you can.

Christian I'll come, but not unaccompanied.

Peter You'll be so much the more welcome. But what companion will you bring?

Christian A shadow.²²

20 **Peter** You couldn't do otherwise, provided you come in broad daylight.

Christian But I'll bring a shadow with a tooth or two,²³ that you shan't invite me with impunity.

Peter Well, do as you like, only don't bring ghosts. But explain, if you will, what the word 'shadows' means.

25 **Christian** Among the learned, uninvited guests who accompany an invited one to a dinner are called 'shadows.'²⁴

Peter Bring as many such shadows along as you wish.

I PROMISE ON THIS CONDITION

30

Christian Yes, I'll come, but on this condition, that you in turn dine with me the day after. Yes, I'll do it, on this understanding, that you be my guest next. I agree to the dinner on this condition, that you in turn be my guest. I promise I will, but only if you do the same with me on the day following. I
35 engage to do it for you. I pledge myself to do it: provided, however, that you lunch with me the next day.

Peter Well, so let it be. So be it. Let it be as you wish. If you bid me, I'll do it. I know the splendour of the French.²⁵ You don't wish to have a free dinner from me unless you pay me back. But dinner parties usually rotate in this
40 manner. Thus a long round of dinner parties is started. By this exchange are dinner parties reciprocated without end.

Christian Nothing more agreeable if the fare's no more elaborate than the everyday kind. But I'm detaining you; perhaps you're going elsewhere.

Peter Oh, no, *I'm* detaining *you*, I think. But we'll chat at more length and more informally tomorrow. But we'll have more jests tomorrow.

5 **Meantime** keep well. Meantime take care to stay well. Meantime stay well.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

10 **Christian** Where are you going now? Where are you hurrying to now? Where are you headed for with such a quick step? Where do you turn now? Where does your journey take you now?

I'm Going Home

15 **Peter** I'm taking myself home. I'm returning home. I'm going back home. I betake myself home. I'm going to see what's happening at home. I'm fetching a doctor. I'm giving up this place for the country. I've arranged to talk at this time with a very important gentleman. I agreed to meet a very important man at this hour.

20 **Christian** Who?

Peter Curio, the chatterbox.²⁶

Christian Then I pray Mercury be with you.

Peter Why shall I need Mercury's protection?²⁷

Christian Because you will have to do with a loquacious person.

25 **Peter** But it would be a more suitable favour to pray Memory to be gracious to me.

Christian Why?

Peter Because I'll need long-suffering ears rather than a quick tongue. The ear is consecrated to Memory.

30 **Christian** Where are you about to go? Where will you go?

Peter This way, to the left; here and there; through the market-place.

Christian I'll accompany you, then. I'll come along and lead you as far as the lane.

Peter I won't permit you to go a roundabout way.²⁸ I shouldn't want you to take so much trouble on my account. Save this favour until it's needed; there's no need of it now. Don't go out of your way for my sake.

Christian To have the pleasure of a friend's company is a short cut for me. I've nothing to do and I'm not lazy – unless I'm a troublesome companion to you.

40 **Peter** No one's a more agreeable companion. But I won't allow you to shut off my left side. I won't permit you to walk on my left.²⁹

Christian Here I commend you to heaven. I don't want you as companion any longer. I don't want you to accompany me further.

COMMENDING

5

Christian Commend me heartily to Curio. See that you give my heartiest possible greetings to Curio, the chatterbox. Take care to commend me to Curio as earnestly as possible. Tell him to regard me as having sent my best wishes. I commend myself to him through you. I commend myself to
 10 you again and again. I commend myself to your kindness as earnestly as I can. (Leave 'I recommend'³⁰ for 'I commend' to barbarians.) See that you're not sparing of words with the chatterbox. Don't be close-mouthed with a big-mouthed fellow.

15

COMPLYING

Peter You want me to humour you? You want me to gratify you? You want me to accommodate you? So you bid me imitate you? Since you wish it so, I'll do it very gladly. Don't hinder me longer; nay, don't let either one hinder the other.

20 **Christian** But, before you leave, I beg you – a stickler for politeness – to teach me how to use these: 'to be a hindrance,' 'to be the cause,' 'to be at fault.' Come, then, show me, I entreat you. Hold forth, please.

AT FAULT, FOR THE REASON, HINDRANCE

25

Peter I must humour you. 'The fault is not in me.' 'The fault is not in you.' 'You're the hindrance.' 'The reason lies in you.' This is correct, to be sure, but much better are:

30

At Fault

I'm not at fault. No fault of mine. I'm free from blame. Your idleness, not the master, not your father, is the reason you don't succeed. You're all at fault. You're each at fault. You're each to blame. You're both guilty. You're both at fault. You've fallen ill by your very own failing, by your very own
 35 fault. (Likewise those to whom blame should be imputed are said to be 'in the wrong,' and those who are under indictment to be 'arraigned,' and those who suffer loss to be 'injured.' It is not permissible to invert this kind of expression recklessly, for example, 'The loss is in him,' 'The wrong is in him.')

40

The Reason

Illness was the reason for my not writing to you. My business, not negligence,

was the reason for writing to you more seldom. What was the reason? What reason was there? I'm not the reason. The courier was the reason you received no letter from me. Love, not study, is the reason you're so gaunt. This is the reason.

5

Hindrance

I won't hinder you. What hindered you? You hindered us. You're always a hindrance. What's hindered you? Who's hindered you? – You have what you sought; it's up to you to imprint it in your memory. You have the reward of your zeal. Farewell, my Christian.

10

Christian Farewell to you too, until tomorrow, Peter.

ON MEETING

15 **Christian** Hearty greetings, my sweetest Augustine.³¹

Augustine Same to you, my kindest Christian. Good morning to you. A good day to you. So, how are things going?

Christian Agreeably, as our affairs are now.³² And I wish everything you wish for.

20 **Augustine** I love you as you deserve. I love you. You're lovable. You speak kindly. You're courteous. I thank you.

I'M ANGRY WITH YOU

25 **Christian** But I'm somewhat vexed with you. But I'm angry with you. But I've been a bit vexed with you. But I'm out of temper with you. But there's something (or 'I have something') I'm vexed with you about.

For What Reason?

30 **Augustine** What's that, I beg you? Why so? For what reason precisely, I pray? What have I done that's wrong? What have I deserved? I'm entitled to [*promereor*] goods or praise; I deserve [*commereor*] ills or punishment (the former is used in a good sense, the latter in a bad one). We win the favour of [*demeremur*] one whom by a kindness we cause to be indebted to us.

35

BECAUSE YOU PAY NO ATTENTION TO ME

Christian Because you don't care about me. Because you have no regard for us. Because you come to see us so seldom. Because you care nothing about us. Because you wholly neglect me. Because you seem to have lost interest in us.

40

Augustine But there's no reason for you to be vexed. But it's more than I deserve. But you're unjustly vexed. For it's not my fault I visit you too seldom. You'll forgive my engagements, on account of which I can't come to see you as often as I wish.

5 **Christian** Well, I'll forgive you if you dine with me today. You'll be acquitted by me on condition that you come to dinner this evening.

Augustine You lay down no unjust terms of peace, Christian, so I'll accept without reluctance. Indeed I'll do it gladly. Indeed I'll do that very willingly. Not reluctantly I'll do it. I won't make myself objectionable on this score. I'll
10 do nothing more gladly than this. I'll do it with willing mind.

Christian I commend your readiness, both in this matter and in all other ones.

Augustine Thus am I accustomed to comply with the wishes of friends, especially those who don't ask something unjust. Absurd! Or did you think
15 I'd refuse what I would have had to ask on my own account?

DON'T DECEIVE ME³³

Christian Come, but take care you don't fool me. Beware of deceiving.
20 Beware of my cherishing hope in vain. Beware of trifling with someone's hopes. Beware of making idle promises.³⁴ See that you don't disappoint me. See that you don't nourish me with vain hope.

Augustine You need not swear to it. In other matters, in different matters, fear faithlessness; in this affair I won't deceive. But look you, take care
25 not to prepare anything out of the ordinary; I don't want any holiday on my account. You know I'm a very abstemious guest, much less a tippler. You know I'm a guest not interested in much food but in many jokes.

Christian I'll take good care of that. For my part, I'll receive you with a
30 Pythagorean dinner, or perhaps one more frugal.

Augustine Nay, one fit for a Diogenes if you wish to please me.³⁵

Christian Oh, I'll receive you with a Platonic dinner at which there'll be plenty of learned stories but little food;³⁶ the pleasure of it will last even until the next day. As a general rule one who's been entertained bountifully
35 is treated handsomely on that day, perhaps, but next day his head aches and his stomach is upset. Whoever dined with Plato would take one pleasure in the simple fare and philosophical tales; another next day, because he'd experience neither headache nor indigestion. So he'd lunch pleasantly, too, on the spice of yesterday's dinner.

40 **Augustine** Good; let it be done as you advise.

Christian See that you leave all your cares at home, and those frowns

too. Bring nothing here except jokes and laughter. And, as Juvenal says, 'Straightway cast off your troubles at my door.'³⁷

Augustine What? You don't want literature to come along with me? I'll bring my Muses with me, unless you're of a different mind.

- 5 **Christian** Lock up the peevish Muses at home, along with your business affairs. Bring all light verse with you; next, your jokes, sayings, banter, quips, jests, everything that will arouse laughter.

- Augustine** It shall be done. We'll smooth our brows.³⁸ We'll play the part of merry fellows.³⁹ We'll laugh our fill. We'll make ourselves sleek.⁴⁰ We'll indulge our taste.⁴¹ We'll dine merrily. We'll act like Epicureans. We'll be of good cheer and be good companions; the unrefined have refinements of their own, with their own peculiar jargon.

Christian Where do you hurry to now?

Augustine To my son-in-law's.

- 15 **Christian** Why thither, why there, why to that place?

Augustine I hear there's some row or other started between them; to restore good feeling, to reconcile them, to make peace between them.

Christian You do well, though I think you're not needed; they'll make an armistice better by themselves.

- 20 **Augustine** Perhaps too a truce has already been proclaimed and a treaty of peace will be concluded at night. But do you want anything else of me?

Christian I'll summon you through my boy.

Augustine I'll be at home whenever you wish. Farewell.

- 25 **Christian** Goodbye. See that you're here at five o'clock.

NOTES

1 For other expressions of thanks see *De copia* 83 CWE 24 461–2.

On Christian and Augustine (who joins the other two at 127:15) see the introduction to these volumes xx–xxii, xxxi, and 'The Profane Feast' n1.

2 Compare the variations that follow with *De copia* 33 CWE 24 348:10–354:13 and 'Copiousness' 166:10–169:3.

3 A phrase from Cicero *Ad familiares* 12:20

4 Cf *Adagia* I vii 74, I viii 67.

5 The following paragraph was denounced as obscene by Edward Lee (Allen Ep 1061:365–80 / CWE Ep 1061:418–40). Erasmus denied the accusation in *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* (Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 290:1346–291:1386). On Lee, one of his most persistent and detested critics, see n24 below and especially 'The Epithalamium' n36; Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 225–34; CEBR.

6 Horace *Epistles* 2.1.269; Persius 1.43

7 *faustum felixque*, a phrase used by the Romans when a great enterprise was undertaken; Cicero *De divinatione* 1.45.102

- 8 Erasmus puns on *gallus* 'cock,' *Gallus* 'Gaul' or 'Frenchman,' and *Gallus* 'a priest of Cybele.' As Erasmus' readers were expected to know, priests of Cybele, the 'Great Mother,' were eunuchs (Catullus 63.1–26), called *Galli* from the river in Phrygia where the cult flourished. Cf 'Patterns' n71.
- 9 Terence *Adelphi* 564
- 10 Ovid *Ex Ponto* 1.3.35–6
- 11 Cretan poet and seer of the sixth century BC, the literary ancestor of Rip van Winkle (*Adagia* I ix 64, IV ii 76). Cf Jerome Ep 33.1. Epimenides is thought to be the author of the dictum about Cretans quoted by St Paul in Titus 1:12. For Erasmus' note on that passage see *Annotaciones in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 968C–D.
- 12 Diogenes Laertius 1.110 says fifty-seven.
- 13 Lucian alludes to the story not in *Vera historia* but in *Timon* 6 and *Philopseudes* 26. Erasmus mentions Epimenides in the earliest edition of the *Colloquies* (November 1518) but without reference to Lucian.
- 14 Despite Erasmus' assertions, the story in *Adagia* I ix 64 is not in the received text of Gellius. Peter does not say it is there, but he implies as much. Erasmus' copy of a 1509 edition of Gellius, with his signature and marginalia, is in the Gemeentebibliotheek, Rotterdam. For a description see Margolin *Bibliographie érasmiennne* (1936–1949) no 159.
- 15 That is, true, authoritative, and sometimes obscure; *Adagia* I vii 91. When Erasmus tells of Epimenides in Ep 54 he includes an allusion to the Sibylline oracles, as he does here.
- 16 Until he tried to understand Scotus, declares Erasmus in 1497 (Ep 64), he thought the tale of Epimenides a mere fable. Now he knows better: Epimenides spent those forty-seven years dreaming of the 'super-subtle subtleties' the Scotists boast of nowadays. The version in the first (November 1518) edition of the *Colloquies* speaks of 'Paris theologians' (page 17 there) without specifying Scotists, but by March 1522 (fol 7 verso) Scotus and Scotists reappear as they were in Ep 64. Henceforth, in the *Colloquies* and many other texts, they are often dismissed as pedantic, pretentious, and unprofitable. See 'The Godly Feast' n190 and the Holbein drawing reproduced in LB IV 463B–C (*Moriae encomium*).
- 17 *affines*. A similar list, with some biblical examples, is given in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 639D–640D.
- 18 By ancient Jewish custom a brother-in-law had the right and duty to marry his brother's widow. See Deut 25:5–10.
- 19 A term combining the meanings of English 'mistress,' 'concubine,' and female 'rival in love.' Erasmus' authority is Gellius 4.3.3; and see *Paraphrasis in Elegantias Laurentii Vallae* ASD I-4 293:381–2. Thraso and Phaedria are rival suitors of the courtesan Thaïs in Terence *Eunuchus*. Europa is the girl whom Zeus, in the form of a bull, abducted; Juno the consort of Zeus. Erasmus wrote some verses on a picture of Europa and the bull (CWE 85–6 68–9, 481–2 no 27 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 267–8 no 71). Thraso, a brash captain in *Eunuchus*, became thereafter a common name for a braggart soldier in comedies.
- 20 Usually . . . with.] Added in the August 1523 edition
- 21 People of a Greek city in southern Italy, notorious for luxury (*Adagia* II ii 65)
- 22 Explained a few lines later
- 23 Like our 'with a sharp tongue.' Cf *Adagia* III vi 87.

- 24 *Adagia* i i 9. To the sources given in CWE 31 58–9 add Plautus *Persa* 298. In the edition of the *Colloquiorum formulae* issued c November 1519 (Louvain: Martens), Erasmus inserted after ‘shadow’ in line 19 here some scornful lines about a boastful Scotist. (For these see ASD 1-3 90 406n.) His critic Edward Lee took these, no doubt correctly, to be aimed at him. In a letter of February 1520 (Allen Ep 1061:330–47 / CWE Ep 1061:374–96) he protested to Erasmus, quoting the passage, which was deleted when the March 1522 edition of the *Colloquies* (Basel: Johann Froben) was printed. See F. Bierlaire ‘La première édition reconnue des *Colloques* d’Erasme’ *Les études classiques* 37 (1969) 56.
- 25 Ironical, for ‘the French love what’s cheap’ (‘The Profane Feast’ 139:39 and n46).
- 26 Apparently the name was a borrowing from Lucan *Bellum civile* 1.269 on Scribonius Curio, a loquacious Roman politician.
- 27 ... *Mercurio favente*. On such invocations see *Adagia* i i 72 and ‘Patterns’ n59. Cf also *Adagia* iv vii 2: *Mercurio dextro*. Mercury was the patron of speech and eloquence; cf ‘Sport’ n7.
- 28 Horace *Satires* 1.19.17
- 29 As befits an inferior; so ‘The Profane Feast’ 153:34–5. See Horace *Satires* 2.5.18; Juvenal 3.131.
- 30 The verb *recommendo* is not classical but is found in medieval Latin.
- 31 The name is borrowed from Erasmus’ friend Augustinus Vincentius Caminadus. See n1 above.
- 32 Horace *Satires* 1.9.5
- 33 For other forms meaning ‘deceive’ see *De copia* 106 CWE 24:482–3.
- 34 *dare verba*; *Adagia* i v 49
- 35 Frugal, simple, and (if Pythagorean) vegetarian meals. On Diogenes’ asceticism see Lucian *Cynicus*.
- 36 Platonic banquets were rich in dialogue and of different degrees of abstemiousness (the drinking party in *Symposium* lasts all night), but Christian refers to the most temperate ones and to Socratic moderation. He has Plutarch in mind as much as Plato; see *Moralia* 686B–D *Quaestiones convivales*. On Erasmus and Plutarch see ‘The Godly Feast’ n303 below.
- 37 *Satires* 11.190
- 38 *Adagia* i viii 48
- 39 *belli homunculi*, from Gellius 13.11.3
- 40 *Adagia* ii iv 75
- 41 *Adagia* ii iv 74, quoting Persius 5.151

THE PROFANE FEAST

Convivium profanum

First printed in the November 1518 and March 1522 editions. In early editions the material from here to the beginning of 'A Short Rule for Copiousness,' the next colloquy, lacked a distinctive title, but in the August–September 1524 edition it was given the running title *Convivium profanum* on the page where Christian bids Peter fetch Augustine. This title was kept in later editions; Erasmus himself uses it in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' (1101:1, 1107:6–7). It is important to notice that several pages of the final text were a revision and enlargement, in the July–August 1522 edition, of passages not in the original edition but added in that of March 1522. See n76 below.

In the original printed text of November 1518 Erasmus himself was one of the guests at the banquet. In the editions of March 1522 and July–August 1522 the name was changed to 'Erasmus,' the name of Erasmus Froben, godson of Erasmus. This change produces an incongruity on 147:15–25, where Thomas More is said to inquire for Erasmus, not Erasmus; the 1522 texts have 'Erasmi,' vocative of 'Erasmus,' and not (as in the 1518 edition) 'Erasme' in the five places where this character is addressed. See 'Erasmus and Erasmus' 1120–1.

With its civility and its mingling of seriousness and banter this supper party has much in common with other *convivia* in the *Colloquies* and often recalls Horace, Athenaeus, and Aulus Gellius. Ben Jonson's *Leges convivales*, 'Sociable Rules for the Apollo,' convey the spirit of this and other Erasmian descriptions of such occasions. Jonson's rules allow 'choice ladies' to attend, and at Erasmus' party too young ladies are present, though they do not speak (142:17–19, 146:32–6, 149:9–10, 153:27–30).

Discussions of fasting here and allusions to ecclesiastical authority, urbane though they are, have an underlying seriousness and a perceptible autobiographical tone that can easily be verified by many other pages in Erasmus' writings. They anticipate the more extended treatments in 'The Godly Feast' and 'A Fish Diet.' In 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' Erasmus devotes more space to 'The Profane Feast' than to the more important 'The Godly Feast.' When Nicolaas Baechem, his Carmelite critic (see 'Rash Vows' n14), attacked what was printed in the March 1522 edition on fasting, Erasmus retorted that he intended to distinguish there between fasting, which was approved by Christ, St Paul, and the apostles and

practised by the early Christians, and the elaborate, detailed regulation of diet enjoined by Mosaic law and only too evident in Christian Europe now (Allen Epp 1300:29–37, 1301:57–60 / CWE Epp 1300:32–41, 1301:98–100). He does not condemn the church's customs; the question is not whether prelates have the power to obligate Christians, but whether it is their intention to do so (Allen Ep 1301:60–74 / CWE Ep 1301:106–38 [the longer version]).

Because 'The Profane Feast' includes so much material left over from the 1518 edition, together with revisions and additions in the March 1522 edition, it lacks the unity and polish of 'The Godly Feast,' which is in every respect the best *convivium* in Erasmus' book. 'The Profane Feast' has a few internal inconsistencies also; for example Augustine at first professes to be an 'Epicurean' (135:6–15) but later, in the discussion of fasting, is the spokesman for what are clearly Erasmian opinions (143:18–146:5). Nevertheless the colloquy must not be underrated. It is lively, amusing, and sometimes less restrained than 'The Godly Feast.'

Six of Erasmus' colloquies ('The Profane Feast,' 'The Godly Feast,' 'The Poetic Feast,' 'The Fabulous Feast,' 'A Feast of Many Courses,' and 'The Sober Feast') are *convivia* or *symposia*. Diverse as these are in scope, themes, and merit, they can be considered usefully as a collection as well as individually. They follow or adapt a literary form established in classical antiquity, a form that became a permanent model when employed by Plato, Xenophon, Lucian, and Cicero and has been imitated ever since, seldom with more success than in the age of Erasmus, which produced, besides the *convivia* in the *Colloquies*, More's *Utopia*, Castiglione's *Courtier*, Ascham's *Toxophilus*, Ulrich von Hutten's *Arminius* and his *Vadiscus*, and Starkey's *Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset*, to name no others.

On the *convivium* as a distinctive genre within the *Colloquia*, and notice of Italian as well as classical examples (whether the latter contributed anything directly to those by Erasmus or not), see Lawrence V. Ryan 'Erasmi convivium: The Banquet Colloquies of Erasmus' *Medievalia et Humanistica* new series 8 (1977) 201–15, and his article 'Art and Artifice in Erasmus' *Convivium profanum*' *Renaissance Quarterly* 31 (1978) 1–16. See also *Erasme: cinq banquets* ed J. Chomarat, D. Ménager et al (Paris 1981). This volume contains the ASD text, accompanied by French translation, introduction, and notes, of all the *convivia* except 'The Poetic Feast.'

A German translation of *Convivium profanum* (Augsburg: Steiner 1524) is recorded by Irmgard Bezzel *Erasmusdrucke des 16. Jahrhunderts in bayerischen Bibliotheken* (Stuttgart 1979) no 539; one (the same?) by Lotter at Magdeburg 1534 by BE 2nd series *Colloquia* III 122.

CHRISTIAN, AUGUSTINE, PETER, ERASMIUS,
THEODORE, GUESTS, MIDAS

- Christian** Ho there, Peter, fetch Augustine¹ to dinner; he accepted for today,
5 as you know.
- Peter** I'm off. – Greetings, poet. Dinner's ready for you now at last. Master's awaiting you at home – come whenever you like.
- Augustine** I'm coming. – Greetings, my dear Christian.
- Christian** Good of you to come. I'm glad you came. I congratulate myself
10 on your coming. Not yet five o'clock,² I believe.
- Peter** Oh, yes, it's long past. It's not far from six. Six o'clock's at hand. You'll soon hear six.
- Augustine** Makes little difference whether I come after five or not, so long as I don't come after dinner, for to arrive after the feast is over is a wretched
15 thing.³ But why such lavishness? Why so many dishes? You don't suppose me a wolf, do you? I don't seem to you a wolf, do I? Don't think I'm a vulture, do you?
- Christian** No vulture, but still not a cicada living on dew.⁴ No luxury here. Elegance has always appealed to me; I hate stinginess. Neither Apicius nor
20 Diogenes pleases me.⁵ Better to have something left over than not enough. If nothing were served except chick-peas, and the pulse were seasoned by soot that chanced to fall into the pot, what then would be eaten? People don't all have the same tastes. And so a moderate variety pleases me.
- Augustine** Aren't you afraid of the sumptuary laws?
- Christian** No, on the contrary I've often offended in the opposite way. We've
25 no need of a Fannian law.⁶ Poverty itself teaches us sufficient frugality.
- Augustine** That wasn't the agreement. You promised far differently.
- Christian** Come on, silly, you don't keep the bargain yourself, since it was agreed you should bring nothing but jokes. But let's put an end to this. Let's
30 wash and take our places. Here, boy, take basin and tray; hang the linen cloth from your shoulder; pour the water. What's the delay? – Wash, Augustine.
- Augustine** After you.
- Christian** Please! I'd rather dine unwashed the livelong year.
- Augustine** Ridiculous! Not the one of higher rank but the one who's dirtier
35 should wash first. Wash, therefore, as you're the fouler.
- Christian** You're too polite. You're more polite than enough, than is fit. What's the good of this politeness? Let's leave foolish ceremonies of this kind – which are now scorned even by the courtiers who long ago introduced them – to the weaker sex. Let three or four of you wash at a
40 time; we need not lose time in conventions of this kind. I shan't assign anyone a place; each should take the one he likes. Whoever enjoys a fire

will rest more comfortably here; whoever is bothered by the light may choose this corner; whoever enjoys a view should sit here. Come now, enough of delays. Sit down. As for me, I'm at home; I'll eat standing if I like, or while walking about. Are you seated? But meantime dinner's spoiling.

- 5 **Augustine** Let's live now and make ourselves sleek.⁷ Let's be Epicureans now. We've no use for Stoic sternness. Farewell, cares! Away with all spite, off with detraction, on with the carefree mind, merry countenance, witty talk.
- 10 **Christian** Who are these Stoics and Epicureans, Augustine?⁸
Augustine The Stoics are a certain morose, stern, sour set of philosophers who measure man's highest good by some sort of moral virtue or other. The Epicureans, far different from them, define human happiness by pleasure.
Christian Then which are you, Stoic or Epicurean?
- 15 **Augustine** I praise Zeno but I follow Epicurus.
Christian What you say as a joke, Augustine, not a few practise seriously nowadays, being philosophers only with respect to cloak and beard.⁹
Augustine What's more, they surpass even the dissolute¹⁰ in luxury.
Christian Dromo,¹¹ come here. Do your duty; ask the blessing.
- 20 **Boy**¹² 'May he who with his bounty feeds the whole creation bless and sanctify whatever is served and shall be served. Amen.'¹³
Christian Bring on the dishes. Why do we hesitate to carve this capon?¹⁴ Why do we shrink from cutting up this rooster?
Augustine I'll play Hercules and slay this monster. Which would you like,
- 25 wings or legs?
Christian Whichever you wish; it makes no difference to me.
Augustine In this breed the wings are considered the best parts; in others, the common opinion is that the legs are better.
Christian You take a lot of trouble on my account. You go to a great deal of
- 30 trouble for my sake. You serve everybody but eat nothing yourself. I'll serve you this wing, but on condition you give back half to me.
Augustine So that's it! But that's serving yourself, not me. Help yourself, for I'm too bold to need to be waited on.
Christian You do very well.
- 35 **Augustine** Ho! Do you serve food to a wolf? You invite a vulture?
Christian But you don't dine; you fast.
Augustine Oh, no, nobody's a bigger glutton than I am.
Christian On the contrary, nobody's a bigger liar. Behave as if you were in your own home.
- 40 **Augustine** I'm quite decided on that already. I'm already resolved on that. That's my inclination. My intention is to do that.

Christian Does this wine please you at all? Does this sup of wine give you pleasure?

Augustine It pleases me very much indeed. Certainly it is most agreeable. It's delightful, really. It gives me no slight pleasure.

5 **Christian** Which do you prefer, red or white?

IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHAT COLOUR IT IS

Augustine I'm equally delighted with both. No matter what colour it is, if
10 only the taste is good. I care not how much wine pleases the eyes if only the taste pleases. What it looks like makes no difference to me if the taste pleases. It matters little what colour it is, what colour it has, if it tastes good. I don't wish to feast the eyes if it's possible to satisfy the palate, provided it's possible to please the palate. The colour's no hindrance provided the taste's
15 agreeable.

Christian I believe you. Yet¹⁵ there are famous gourmets who deny that wine deserves approval unless it pleases the four senses: the eyes by its colour, the nostrils by its fragrance, the palate by its taste, the ears by its name and fame.

20 **Augustine** Absurd! What does reputation do for drink?

Christian So much that many men of taste have been loud in their praise of a native Louvain wine they'd taken for Beaune.¹⁶

Augustine Maybe their palate had been dulled by heavy drinking.

Christian No, they hadn't yet touched the cup. But I want to hear your
25 opinion; you're a man of much experience in these matters.

Augustine My countrymen¹⁷ prefer white to red because red is a little too bitter; the other's somewhat dry, to be sure, but more mellow and, as I believe, more healthful.

Christian We've also¹⁸ a ruddy and a golden and a purple. This is new
30 wine,¹⁹ this year's. This one is two years old, if age attracts anyone. We've also one four years old, but it's now spoiled and insipid with age; the strength has disappeared with age.

Augustine I hear of Lucullan wealth.

Christian Hey, boy, where are you dawdling? You're completely neglecting
35 us here. Don't you see how great the drought is here? What if a fire started in this state of affairs? How would we put it out? Fill everyone's cup. What's wrong with you, Augustine, that you're so glum? What's happened to you that you sit there rather downcast? What makes you so unhappy? Either you don't feel well or you're composing verses. You play Chrysippus now; you
40 need a Melissa.²⁰

Augustine What story's this you tell me?

Christian Chrysippus is said to have concentrated so much on logical subtleties that he would have starved to death even at the table unless his maid Melissa had stuffed food into his mouth.

5 **Augustine** Truly he didn't deserve to be waited upon. But if uncommunicativeness annoys you and a more vocal feast pleases, you've means of making it one.

Christian I remember. Good advice; we should drink more freely, more largely, more copiously; we must drink the wine neater.²¹

10

YOU'VE HIT IT

Augustine You've hit the nail on the head. You're correct. You've hit the mark.²² For 'Whom has the flowing bowl not filled with wit?'²³

15 **Christian** Very learnedly spoken, to be sure, Augustine, as is everything you say; but since we've fallen into talk of wine, chanced to mention wine, I'd like to ask why the ancients called Bacchus, whom they liked to think the inventor of wine, the god of poets. What has that tipsy god to do with poets, worshippers of the maiden Muses?

20 **Augustine** A question worthy of the cups, Bacchus love me! But I understand well enough what your questions are driving at.

Christian What, pray?

25 **Augustine** You artfully inject an argument about wine (a French trick learned in Paris, I suspect) in order, obviously, that less wine may be consumed meanwhile. Go on, I pronounce you a man;²⁴ you haven't wasted your time at so great a university.²⁵

Christian I accept your pronouncement; I'll pay you back with jests when it's convenient. But to the question.

30 **Augustine** I'll answer when I've drunk, since it would be foolish to argue about a question of wine with a dry mouth. Christian, I drink to you, I pledge you this half cup.

Christian I accept it from you gladly. Your health! *Prosit!*

35 **Augustine** Now I'm ready to carry out your wishes. I'll do it backwards,²⁶ after my fashion. The secret of their ascribing a youthful appearance to Bacchus is that drinking wine rids our minds of cares and anxieties and induces a certain cheerfulness. Hence it seems to restore old men themselves to youth,²⁷ making them jollier and handsomer – what Horace explicitly attests in so many places, and above all in these lines:

40 When at the seaside for a change of air
I want some mellow drink to drive out care,
To fill my veins with all the wealth of hope,

Impart the gift of gab, and help me cope
With love, so my Lucanian girl will see
How nice for her to have a lad like me.²⁸

5 Now the consecration of poets to this god is intended, I suspect, to signify that wine both arouses invention and ministers to eloquence, two things very suitable to a poet. This is why poems written by water-drinkers are insipid.²⁹ Bacchus is ardent by nature but is made more restrained by the presence of nymphs.³⁰ Has your query been answered?

10 **Christian** I've never heard anything more probable said by a poet. You deserve a drink from a jewelled cup.³¹ Here boy, remove this tray and serve the rest.

Augustine That's a loutish boy you have.

Christian He's a sly devil.

15 **Augustine** Why don't you train him differently?

Christian It's hard for an old dog to learn new tricks. It's very hard to change an old rascal's habits. An old dog doesn't easily learn new tricks. He suits me, certainly. The lid fits the pan.³²

20 IF I KNEW WHAT PLEASED YOU I'D SERVE YOU

Augustine If I knew your palate I'd pick something for you. I'd serve you if your taste were sufficiently known to me. I'd lay it before you if I knew what would please you most. If I knew your preference I'd be your waiter.

25 I'm as knowing in taste as in judgment.

Christian You have a most instructed taste. Nothing more learned than your taste. Nor do I think you inferior to him to whose extraordinary knowledge the satirist has borne witness:

30 One bite – and he'd know where the oysters were bred;
One glance – and he'd tell you the sea-urchin's home.³³

Augustine And you, Christian – to compare equals with equals³⁴ – have listened to Epicurus, I think, or have been trained in the school of Catius.³⁵

35 For what is more judicious or more discriminating than your palate?

Christian If I understood oratory as well as I do cookery, Cicero himself would not excel me.³⁶

Augustine For my part, if I had to do without one or the other, I'd take cookery rather than rhetoric.

40 **Christian** I endorse your choice; you decide soberly, acutely, and truly.
What good is the chatter of orators except to stroke idle ears with empty

pleasure? Cookery feeds and restores both palate and belly, and the whole man, big as he is. 'Let the laurel³⁷ yield to eloquence,' says Cicero,³⁸ but let both yield to the kitchen. The Stoics³⁹ have never much pleased me with their measuring of everything by the standard of 'moral goodness,' whatever that is; they think skin and palate of no account. I can't tell you how much wiser I think Aristippus⁴⁰ was than Diogenes.

Augustine As for me, I scorn the Stoics and their fasts. Epicurus I praise and esteem above the Cynic Diogenes, who lived on raw vegetables and clear water. Hence I'm not surprised if Alexander, the most fortunate of kings, preferred to be Alexander instead of Diogenes.⁴¹

Christian Nor would I, however mean a manikin I may be, change places with Diogenes; perhaps your Catius too would refuse to do so. The philosophers of our day take a more sensible view; they're content to dispute in the Stoic fashion while in manner of living they surpass even Epicurus himself. Yet philosophy is a supremely excellent thing, in my opinion, if taken in small doses.⁴² Too much philosophizing I don't approve of; it's an altogether barren, fruitless, and dismal affair. When I experience disaster or grief, then at last I take refuge in philosophy, as in a medicine. When I've recovered I take leave of it again.⁴³

Augustine I commend your reasoning. You philosophize beautifully. Farewell, then, philosopher – not of the porch⁴⁴ but of the kitchen.

Christian Just what ails you, Erasmus, that you're so glum? What does your wrinkled brow mean? Your silence? Are you angry with me for having you to a dinner that's too meagre?

Erasmus Not at all. I'm angry with you for going to so much expense for my sake. Augustine strictly forbade you to make a special occasion on his account. You won't want us ever to return hereafter, for this is the sort of dinner usually given by people who have made up their minds to give only one. Exactly what sort of guests do you suppose you've received? You seem to have prepared a dinner not for old friends but for viceroys. Do you think we're gluttons? This isn't giving a dinner but a three-day gorging.

Christian You still a Demea? Argue tomorrow if you like; be a Micio for today, I beg you.⁴⁵ We'll bicker tomorrow about the cost of the dinner; I want to hear nothing but jokes now.

Augustine Christian, do you prefer beef or mutton?

Christian I'm much fonder of beef, but I suppose mutton would be better for me. That's human nature; we're fondest of what is most harmful.

Augustine The French are marvellously fond of pork.

Christian The French love what's cheap.⁴⁶

Augustine In this respect only I'm a Jew, for I hate nothing so much as pork.⁴⁷

Christian No loss, for what's more unhealthful? I agree with the Jews, not the French, in this matter.

Erasmus I'm equally fond of mutton and pork, but for different reasons. Mutton I eat freely because I love it; pork I don't touch, out of love – lest I give offence.

Christian You're a fine fellow, Erasmus, and a merry one. Yes, I often wonder to myself how there happens to be such an immense variety of tastes. To quote Horace,

10 My guests are three, yet disagree
 About the dishes.
 One says this, another that;
 What *are* their wishes?⁴⁸

15 **Erasmus** Though, as the comic poet says, 'There are as many opinions as men,' and 'Every man follows his own bent,'⁴⁹ still nobody will convince me there's more variety in men's natures than in their tastes; there's so much you can hardly find two men who like the same things. I've seen many who can't stand even the smell of butter or cheese. Some people are sickened
 20 by meat. One man abstains from boiled foods, another from roasted. Many prefer water to wine. And, incredibly enough, I've seen a man who would use neither bread nor wine.

Christian And precisely what did the poor chap eat? What did he feed on?

25 **Erasmus** He didn't object to other things – meat, fish, cabbage, fruit.

Christian You want me to believe that?

Erasmus If you like.

Christian I believe, but on condition that you in turn will believe any lies I tell.

30 **Erasmus** Oh, I'll do that; only lie gracefully.

Christian As if anything could be more shameless than your yarn!

Erasmus What will your effrontery say if I show you the man?

Christian Must be some mere skin-and-bones fellow, some skeleton⁵⁰ of a man.

35 **Erasmus** Oh, no, you'd say he was an athlete.

Christian Polyphemus, rather.⁵¹

Erasmus I'm surprised at your surprise, since there are many people who use dried fish instead of bread. Others use roots of plants as we do bread.⁵²

Christian I believe you – but go on lying.

40 **Erasmus** I remember, when I was in Italy,⁵³ seeing someone who nourished himself with sleep, using neither food nor drink.

Christian You're beyond shame. I can't help quoting the satirist: 'Then the empty bags of wind blow out huge lies.'⁵⁴ You're making that up. Now you play the poet (since I shrink from calling you a liar).

5 **Erasmus** Let me be counted a liar if Pliny, a most reliable author, did not write that a bear is wonderfully nourished on sleep alone for a fortnight – a sleep so heavy, however, that it can't be roused even if wounded.⁵⁵ Nay – that you may marvel even more – I'll add what Theophrastus writes: that during this time cooked bear flesh, if kept, comes to life.⁵⁶

Christian I fear Terence's Parmeno wouldn't keep these tales to himself!⁵⁷
10 As for me, I'll believe you easily. – I would offer you venison if I were polite enough.

Erasmus Where did you get this game? This meat?

Christian Midas, that incomparably generous fellow and my very dear friend, sent it to me as a present – yes, a present, but in such a fashion that I
15 could often buy it for less.

Erasmus How so?

Christian Because I had to tip his servants more than I would spend if I bought it at a butcher's.

Erasmus What compels you to do this?

20 **Christian** The fiercest tyrant of them all.

Erasmus Who's that?

Christian Custom.⁵⁸

Erasmus Undoubtedly that tyrant often forces the most unjust laws on mortals.

25 **Christian** The very same Midas, according to his habit, went hunting for this stag day before yesterday. – How about you? You're addicted to this sport.

Augustine I've given it up. I hunt nothing but learning now.

Christian But to me learning seems more elusive than any stag.

30 **Augustine** Yet we do overtake it, thanks to those two hounds, curiosity and honest toil. Curiosity furnishes the strongest incentive to learning, and as the poet so eloquently wrote, 'Relentless toil overcomes everything.'⁵⁹

Christian A courteous rebuke, Augustine – just like you; and so I won't quit, rest, or tire until I catch up.

35 **Augustine** Venison's quite seasonable now. – Pliny records something remarkable about this animal.

Christian What, pray?

Augustine Whenever they've pricked up their ears⁶⁰ they hear most acutely; but on the other hand, when they've put them down they're deaf.⁶¹

40 **Christian** Same thing often happens to me. When there's any talk of getting money, nobody hears better; like Pamphilus in Terence in this respect, I prick

up my ears.⁶² When the talk's about my paying out money, down they go at once.

Augustine I approve; you do as becomes you.

Christian Do you want these hare's legs?

5 **Augustine** Take them yourself.

Christian Or do you prefer the back?

Augustine This animal has nothing you can eat except loins and legs.

Christian Ever seen a white hare?

Augustine Often. Pliny writes that white ones are found in the Alps, where
10 in winter they're believed to feed on snow.⁶³ Whether it's true or not is up to Pliny. If snow makes a hare's skin white, the stomach must be white too.

Christian Doesn't seem likely to me.

Augustine Hear something more extraordinary – though perhaps you've heard it before. It's said they're bisexual and that females breed either with
15 or without the male.⁶⁴ Many have asserted this, especially hunters.

Christian You're right about that. But let's try these rabbits, if you please, because they're fat and tender. I'd serve that young lady if I were sitting close to her. Augustine, look out for your neighbour there, if you will, since you're experienced at waiting on these beauties.⁶⁵

20 **Augustine** I know what you mean, you scoffer.

Christian Are you fond of goose?

Augustine Extremely fond of it – I'm not at all hard to please. But this goose doesn't please me somehow, for I've never in my life seen anything drier; it's drier than pumice or even Furius' stepmother, whom Catullus
25 makes so much fun of.⁶⁶ Seems just like wood to me. And, by Hercules, I'm really inclined to think it's an old soldier grown lean with too much guard duty. For a goose is said to be, of all creatures, by far the most vigilant. Indeed, unless I miss my guess this goose is one of those which, when the watchmen and their dogs were sound asleep, once saved the Roman
30 Capitol.⁶⁷

Christian Lord, yes, because I believe it's left over from that era!

Augustine And this hen had a slim diet, or was in love, or surely was jealous, a malady to which these creatures are particularly susceptible. – This capon fattened much better. See what taking pains will do. Now if we
35 were to make a capon of our Gallic Theodore,⁶⁸ he'd grow much fatter.

Theodore I'm no cock.⁶⁹

Augustine Admitted; you're not a cock of Cybele or a barnyard cock but perhaps a *gallus gallaceus*.

Christian What's that?

40 **Augustine** I leave this puzzle for you to guess.⁷⁰ I've played the part of the Sphinx; you be Oedipus.⁷¹

Christian Tell me honestly, Augustine: did you never have any connection with Frenchmen? No relationship or dealing with Frenchmen?

Augustine None whatever.

Christian So much the worse for you.

5 **Augustine** But I've had some with French women.⁷²

Christian – Would you like some *pâté de fois gras*? It was esteemed as a great delicacy by the ancients.⁷³

Augustine I shan't refuse what you offer me.

Christian Don't expect Roman dainties.

10 **Augustine** What?

Christian Artichokes, snails, tortoise, conger eels, toadstools, mushrooms, truffles.⁷⁴

Augustine I prefer a turnip to all of those.⁷⁵ You're kind and generous, Christian.

15 **Christian** Nobody touches these partridges or pigeons. Tomorrow's a fast day appointed by the church. Fortify yourselves against this hunger. Ballast⁷⁶ your ship against the coming storm. War's at hand; provision your belly.

Augustine I wish you hadn't mentioned that word 'fast.' We'd have risen from dinner feeling merrier. You make us unhappy before the time.

20 **Christian** How come?

Augustine⁷⁷ Because I hate fish worse than I do a snake.⁷⁸

Christian You're not alone in that.

Augustine Who introduced this nuisance?

Christian Who showed the medicinal use of aloes, wormwood, and
25 scammony?⁷⁹

Augustine But they're given to sick people.

Christian So fast days are quite properly given to healthy ones. Sometimes it's better to be sick than too healthy.

Augustine Yet in my opinion the Jews of old had less of a burden imposed
30 on them. Certainly I could abstain from eels and pork without trouble, were it only permitted to fill up on capons and partridges.

Christian In many matters it's not the fact but the intention that distinguishes us from the Jews. They used to refrain from certain foods as if from unclean things that would defile the mind. We, though we know that to the pure all
35 things are pure,⁸⁰ nevertheless deny nourishment to the lustful flesh as if to an unruly steed, so as to render it more obedient to the spirit.⁸¹ Sometimes we discipline our excessive use of delicacies by the vexation of abstinence.

Augustine Agreed, but circumcision could be defended by the same argument – it tempers sexual lust and produces pain. If everyone detested
40 fish as much as I do, I'd scarcely inflict such torture on a parricide.

Christian Some prefer the taste of fish to that of flesh.

Augustine Then it suits those who look out for their appetite, not their health.

Christian Indeed I've heard that among such as Aesopus and Apicius,⁸² in ancient times, fish was regarded as a special dainty.

5 **Augustine** How can dainties agree with torture?

Christian Morays,⁸³ scari, or sturgeons aren't for everyone.

Augustine Hence only the poor are tortured, and they have a bad enough time even when allowed to eat meat. Often it happens that although the church permits meat-eating, one's purse forbids.

10 **Christian** A hard prohibition, so help me!

Augustine But if the rich, forbidden to eat meat, turn to dainties instead, and if the poor cannot often afford to eat meat even when allowed to do so – or even fish, which generally costs more – who will benefit by the prohibition?

15 **Christian** Everybody: for the poor may eat snails or frogs, or gnaw an onion or leek; the middle class will reduce somewhat its daily fare; but if the rich use this occasion to indulge themselves, they should blame their own gluttony and not find fault with the church's ordinance.

Augustine Well said. All the same, to require the poor to abstain from meat
20 when they toil so hard to feed their families and are far from rivers and lakes is to decree hunger, or rather starvation.⁸⁴ Yet if Homer is to be trusted, starvation is by far the most wretched kind of death.⁸⁵

Christian So it seemed to blind Homer, but to Christians no one is wretched who dies a good death.

25 **Augustine** So be it! Still, it's hard to require anyone to die.

Christian Pontiffs⁸⁶ don't forbid the eating of meat in order to kill men, but that men may suffer a little if they've done wrong, or that by the elimination of too rich a diet the body may war less against the spirit.

Augustine Eating meat in moderation will have precisely the same effect.

30 **Christian** But when people differ so much in their physiques it's impossible to prescribe exact rules about meat. To forbid that sort of food *is* possible.

Augustine And some fish are very nourishing; some meats aren't.

Christian But on the whole, meat is more nourishing.

Augustine Well, tell me: if you were going on a journey would you prefer a
35 spirited and frisky horse or a diseased one that would stumble from time to time and throw its rider?

Christian What's the point of your question?

Augustine That a fish diet, when the humours are harmed, renders our
40 bodies liable to serious diseases, so that they're no longer capable of obeying the spirit.⁸⁷

Christian What diseases?

Augustine Gout, fever, leprosy, scrofula.

Christian How do you know?

Augustine I believe the physicians – I'd rather do that than experiment.

Christian That may happen in a few cases.

5 **Augustine** For my part, I believe it happens in many. Furthermore, since the mind acts through the physical organs of the body,⁸⁸ which are influenced by good or bad humours, it cannot, if its instruments are injured, exert its power as it wishes.

Christian I'm aware that a fish diet is emphatically condemned by
10 physicians, but our forefathers, whom we are bound to obey, thought differently.

Augustine Men were formerly bound not to break the sabbath, too, but it was more important to save a man on the sabbath.⁸⁹

Christian Let everyone look out for his own salvation.

15 **Augustine** Not at all, if we will listen to Paul: 'Let no man seek his own, but every man the good of another.'⁹⁰

Christian But how come we have this new theologian, this new and unlooked-for professor,⁹¹ at our dinner?

Augustine Because fish don't agree with me.

20 **Christian** What of it? Don't you abstain from meat?

Augustine Yes, I abstain, but reluctantly and not without much harm to myself.

Christian 'Charity beareth all things.'

[**Augustine**]⁹² True, but it exacts as little as possible.⁹³ If it beareth all
25 things, why are we forbidden to eat those foods which the freedom of the gospel permitted? Why do those from whom Christ has so often required that they love him permit so many men's bodies to be exposed to the danger of fatal diseases, and their souls to the danger of eternal damnation, for the sake of something neither enjoined by Christ nor necessary in
30 itself?

Christian When necessity urges otherwise, the power of a human ordinance and the will of a legislator come to an end.⁹⁴

Augustine But the stumbling-block⁹⁵ of the weak doesn't come to an end. Nor do the scruples of a delicate conscience. Finally, there's no satisfactory
35 agreement about the limits of this 'necessity.' Is it when the fish-eater begins to give up the ghost? Too late to serve a man meat when he's dying! When ague racks his body? Diet makes little difference then!

Christian What would you like to be prescribed?

Augustine I know what, if I were entrusted with dictatorship over
40 ecclesiastical affairs.

Christian What do you mean by that?

Augustine If I were pope,⁹⁶ I would urge everyone to perpetual sobriety of life, especially when a feast day was near. But I would decree that a person might eat anything for the sake of bodily health so long as he did it moderately and thankfully, and I would labour to have the decrease in corporal observances of this kind offset by increased zeal for true godliness.

Christian This is so important, in my judgment, that we should make you pope.

Augustine You laugh, but nevertheless this neck could support even a triple crown.⁹⁷

Christian Meantime take care that these remarks are not written down in the articles of the Sorbonne.⁹⁸

Augustine No, whatever has been said will be writ in wine, as is fitting for remarks made over the cup. – But now we’ve had enough theology at this party. We’re at dinner, not the Sorbonne.

Christian What stops us from saying Sorbonne, when there’s a lot of absorbing?

Augustine Let’s absorb, then, and not argue, lest our Sorbonne be named from sorbs instead of from the absorbing⁹⁹ of wine.¹⁰⁰

Christian Come, my kind guests, I beg you to accept our poor, slight dinner. Put up with it cheerfully. Be merry and at ease, however slender and niggardly the feast may be. Relying on your good nature, I’ve dared to invite you informally. And certainly your coming to me is a sight not only pleasing but also very cheering.

Guests Our dear Christian, we think your dinner exceedingly choice and sumptuous. There’s only one thing wrong – your apologizing for it. For it’s more than sufficiently splendid. I’d consider a feast elegant and excellent if it consisted, first, of plain food, next of gaiety, laughter, jokes, and wit – all of which have been present at ours. But just here something comes to my mind concerning the number of guests, who, wrote Varro,¹⁰¹ should be no fewer than three or more than nine. Three is the number of the Charites or Graces, patronesses of kindness and benevolence; and nine the number of the Muses, patronesses of polite learning. But here, I see, are ten guests,¹⁰² apart from the young ladies.

Augustine Couldn’t have happened more suitably. We’re a bit wiser than Varro himself, since we’ve brought three very charming maidens;¹⁰³ the three Graces, as it were. Then, because we must never believe that Apollo is far from the band of nine Muses, we did right to add a tenth guest.

Christian Spoken like a poet. If I had a laurel, I’d crown you poet laureate.

Augustine If I were crowned with a mallow, I’d be poet mallowate.¹⁰⁴ I don’t pretend to so great a distinction. This honour is greater than suits me. I am quite unworthy of such an honour.

Christian Are you willing, each of you, to do as much for me as I'll do for you?

Guests We are, and gladly.

Christian Then drain your cup, each in turn, following my example. I drink
5 your health first, Midas.

Midas I accept with pleasure. (A common substitute is 'I'm ready and waiting.') Certainly I shan't decline. For your sake I'll decline nothing.

Christian Next drink to the others.

Midas Erasmus, I'll drink half a bowl to you.

10 **Erasmus** I pray it may do you good! Good luck and prosperity to you!
Prosit! ('May it profit you' is a harsher expression.)

Christian But why is the bowl standing still? Why doesn't it go the rounds? We're out of wine. Where are your eyes, you rogue? Off with you; fetch two pints of the same kind.

15 **Boy** Greetings, Erasmus; somebody at the door asks you to come out.

Erasmus Who is it?

Boy He says he's More's servant, and that his master has arrived from Britain and wishes you to go and see him, since he leaves for Germany at dawn.¹⁰⁵

Erasmus Christian, let the bill be drawn up, for I must be off.

20 **Christian** I'll look after the bill for this dinner, most learned Erasmus. No use your trying to count it up; I'm grateful to you for honouring our party with your presence. But it's a nuisance that you're called away; the comedy isn't finished yet.

Erasmus What's left except for me to say 'Farewell. Now give your
25 applause'?¹⁰⁶

Christian Well, let's take it for the best, since you aren't rushing off from horse to donkeys¹⁰⁷ but from friends to dearest friends.

Erasmus For my part, I thank you just as much for having kindly invited me to this extremely delightful party. Farewell, my best of friends. Drink
30 briskly and live merrily!

Christian Ho there, Dromo! – You've all been sitting idle for a long time. No one want anything more?

Guests Not a thing. We've done our part vigorously.

Christian Then remove these things and serve the dessert. Change trenchers
35 and plates. Pick up my knife that fell to the floor. Pour wine over the pears. We've some early blackberries – raised here at home, too.

Guests They'll be all the sweeter for being home-grown.

Christian Look here: wax-coloured plums.¹⁰⁸ Look, damsons,¹⁰⁹ seldom
40 seen hereabouts, and ripe apples, and a new variety of apple. I planted the parent with my own hands. Chestnuts – every fruitful dainty our orchards produce.

Augustine But there are no flowers.

Christian French trappings. They're fondest of the display that costs least. That's not our disposition and purpose.

Augustine You'll¹¹⁰ find the French aren't the only ones who like what's
5 cheapest.

Christian But see here, Augustine, you don't suppose you've drunk here for nothing,¹¹¹ do you? That I've entertained you gratis? You still owe half a bowl to the one who pledged you.

Augustine He let me off long ago. He cancelled that debt.

10 **Christian** What gives him the right to claim so great a power? The pope himself could hardly loosen a bond like this. You know the ancient rule of banquets: 'Either drink or depart.'¹¹²

Augustine The creditor, to whose advantage it was that the debt be paid, has the right to cancel it.

15 **Christian** But it's to the interest of all the guests that rules be kept inviolate.

Augustine Well, since this is a sacred obligation for Germans,¹¹³ I'll soak up what's left. But what do I owe you?

Christian You alone must pay for everybody. Why do you turn pale? Never fear; you can do it easily. Do what you've often done; see that we rise from
20 the table better instructed in some point of politeness.¹¹⁴ For you're aware that the ancients used to banter about light subjects during dessert.¹¹⁵ Come, then: in which ways, and in how many ways, can the phrase 'unworthy to be heard' be expressed?

25 UNWORTHY TO BE HEARD¹¹⁶

Augustine You've said it elegantly by means of the supine.¹¹⁷ 'It's not at all worthy to be heard.' 'It's not worth hearing.' 'It's not worthy to be heard.' 'It's unworthy of being heard.' 'Too trivial to deserve hearing.' 'Hardly
30 worth bothering about.' 'Not important enough to be heard.' 'Too silly to be heard.' 'Not worth telling.'

Christian In how many ways can this sentence be varied: 'It costs me dearly'?

35 HOW TO VARY THIS SENTENCE: 'IT COSTS ME DEARLY.'¹¹⁸

Augustine By these words: 'I lay out,' 'I spend,' 'I bestow,' 'it costs,' as: 'I've spent much labour in teaching you.' 'I've spent a lot of work on that affair.' 'I've laid out as much coin as care on that business.' 'I've spent no
40 little money, a lot of time, a great deal of labour, some talent.' 'I've used up much midnight oil.' 'This affair costs me many night-watches, much sweat,

many labours, much toil, huge expenditures, a lot of money.' 'It costs me more than you'd believe.' 'My wife costs me less than my horse.'

Christian But what do you mean, Augustine, by using this word 'costs' at one time with the ablative and at another time with the genitive case?'

- 5 **Augustine** You've raised a very useful and comprehensive question. I'll answer briefly, however, lest I weary my guests by my chatter. But I want to hear everyone's opinion on this subject in order (as I said) not to be a nuisance to anyone.

Christian Why shouldn't the girls¹¹⁹ want the same thing, too?

- 10 **Augustine** They'll¹²⁰ only listen. I'll begin, then; may the goddess of grammar help me! You know there are words of buying and selling, and others of like signification, with which the genitive of the following words is used alone when no nouns are used: 'for so much,' 'how much,' 'more,' 'less,' 'just as much,' 'howsoever much,' 'at whatsoever price.' But if nouns
15 are added, both are changed to ablatives. If a certain price is used, you put it in the ablative; if it's expressed by an adjective used as a noun, you put it in the ablative unless you prefer to say it adverbially.

Christian What verbs are they you're making rules about?

- Augustine** Generally they're 'I buy,' 'I sell,' 'I redeem' (what is taken or
20 lost), 'I vend,' 'I put up for sale,' 'I resell' (that is, sell again what was sold to me), 'I am on sale,' that is, 'I am put up for sale,' the preterite of which is 'I was for sale' or 'I have been sold'; supine, 'for sale,' hence 'to be sold.' From this, that is, 'I sell,' comes 'saleable.' 'I earn' for 'I'm in service' and 'I get pay.' 'I purchase,' that is, 'I buy,' or 'I engage to take.' 'I exchange,' 'I change,'
25 'I barter.' (*Cambire* in this sense is thoroughly barbarous.) 'I estimate,' 'I appraise,' 'I put a price on' for 'I estimate,' 'I judge.' 'I bid,' 'you bid,' 'I make an offer for,' 'you make an offer for,' 'I knock down to the highest bidder.' 'I am sold,' that is, 'I am advertised for sale.' 'I value' for 'I estimate' or 'I appraise.' 'It costs' for 'It is bought.' 'To hire,' 'to lease.' 'I lend on interest,'
30 'I grant at interest,' 'I take interest,' 'I receive interest.' 'I contract for,' 'I've contracted for,' 'I agree to,' 'I've agreed to,' that is, 'I make an agreement.'

Christian Give an example.

BUYING AND SELLING¹²¹

35

Augustine How much a year do you rent this field for?

Our reply will be: For twenty French pounds.¹²²

Oh, you charge too high a rent.

On the contrary, I once rented it for much more.

- 40 But I won't hire for so much.

Damned if you'll hire for less.

No, your neighbour Chremes,¹²³ now, has offered a field and asks a price for it.

How much?

Just as much as you ask. But a better field.

5 You lie.

I do as bidders usually do. Keep it yourself at that price.

Why do you bid or make an offer when you won't buy anything?

Whatever price you knock it down for, I'll pay in good faith.

10 *Another Example*

How much do you sell this eel for, Syra?¹²⁴

Ten obols.

Too much, you shameless hussy.

Oh, no, very little; nobody will sell to you for less. Hope to die if it doesn't

15 cost me as much or almost as much, certainly.

You lie, sorceress, since you want to sell it at double or triple the cost.

And a hundredfold if I could, but I don't find fools!

What if I should bid for you yourself? How much are you worth?

As much as you please. How much will you bid for me?

20 How large a price do you put on yourself? Tell me, how much do you appraise yourself at? How much do you advertise yourself for?

Ten crowns.¹²⁵

What, so much?

Oh-ho, do you value me at less? More than once, in the old days, I've been

25 hired for more for one night.

I believe it, but now I value you at much less than I do a fish.

Go to hell,¹²⁶ you good-for-nothing! I set just as much value on you as you do on me.

Whoever buys you for a farthing will pay too much.

30 Either I'll be bought for more or I won't be sold.

If you want to come high you need a mask; those wrinkles won't let you be sold more dearly.

I'm not for sale to one who doesn't want me at that price.

As for me, I wouldn't buy you even for a straw.

35 I've cost more.

Third Example

I attended an auction today.

You don't say so?

40 I bid on taxes.¹²⁷

But for how much?

Ten thousand.

Oh, so much?

Don't be surprised. There were those who bid much more, few who bid less. To whom were the taxes finally knocked down?

5 Chremes,¹²⁸ your wife's dearest and closest friend. But guess how much they fetched.

Ten.

Fifteen, rather.

10 Good Lord! I wouldn't want the man himself, plus his whole family, knocked down to me for half the sum.

But he's willing to pay double that for your wife.

Have you noticed that in these expressions, whenever there's a noun denoting a price it's put in the ablative, other words being put either in the genitive or changed to an adverb? You've never heard the comparative
15 without nouns, except these two, 'more' and 'less.'¹²⁹ And there are other verbs, of which we've spoken, that are not very different: 'I am,' 'I do,' 'I have,' 'I consider,' 'I estimate,' 'I weigh,' which generally mean the same thing. Likewise 'I become.' But they are usually joined by these genitives:
20 'of much value,' 'of little worth,' 'of great value,' 'at a higher price,' 'at the highest price,' 'of less value,' 'of least value,' 'of very great value,' 'of so much worth,' 'of how much value,' 'worth a straw,' 'a hair,' 'of no worth,' 'of no account,' 'this much,' and any others like these.¹³⁰

Christian Give examples.

25

VALUING¹³¹

Augustine You know how much I've always esteemed you? You will be valued among men in proportion to your virtue. I've always esteemed my teachers very highly. In these times gold is sold at a high price, literature for
30 nothing, or counts for nothing. I have less gold than you might think. A straw for your threats! I put very little value on your promises. I don't care a bit about you. If wisdom were valued as highly as money, nobody would need gold. Gold without wisdom counts for more among us than wisdom without gold. I esteem you the more because you're learned. You'll amount to less
35 here because you're very clumsy at lying. There are many here who turn black into white.¹³² You're more to me because you love literature. Your worth with everybody will be proportionate to your wealth. Everywhere you'll be accounted as highly as you have money to count. It doesn't matter how much you possess, but how worthy you are. I value no one so highly as my I do Christian.

40 Other verbs also, which do not *per se* signify 'purchase' or something similar, are found with these genitives and ablatives. 'Peter buys a kiss from

the girl for a crown.' 'Good luck to him! I wouldn't kiss at so high a price.' 'How much do you play for?' 'How much did you dine for?' 'Some, we read, dined at a cost of six hundred thousand sesterces,¹³³ but the French often dine for a liard.'¹³⁴ 'How much does Faustus charge for teaching?' 'Little, but more than Delius.' 'How much, then?' 'Nineteen guilders.' 'I wouldn't learn to lie at so high a price.' 'Phaedria, in Terence, lost both his money and himself.'¹³⁵ 'But I wouldn't wish to love at so great a cost.' 'Some people sleep at great cost.'¹³⁶ 'Demosthenes got more for keeping quiet than others did for speaking.'¹³⁷ 'I beg you take it equably and kindly.'

There's another class of verbs also that require the accusative along with the genitive or ablative case. They are: 'I accuse,' that is, 'I bring a charge' or 'I blame' even one who is not present. 'I find fault with,' 'I blame' (without judicial process); 'I complain of,' 'I reprehend.' 'I charge,' 'I fasten suspicion upon,' 'I accuse,' 'I bring an action against,' 'I summon,' 'I indict,' 'I convict,' 'I condemn,' 'I pronounce him to be at fault,' 'I admonish,' 'I remind.'

Christian For example?

ACCUSING¹³⁸

Augustine 'Scipio is accused of courting public favour,¹³⁹ or 'charged with courting public favour.' 'You are most shameless to charge me with shamelessness.' 'Lepidus is arraigned for extortion.' 'He is accused of a capital crime.' 'If you accuse a man of avarice you'll get a bad reputation.' 'Remind him of his former fortune.' 'By this very word mortals are reminded of their condition.' 'Remind Lepidus of his promise.' And there are many other expressions that take a double accusative: 'I teach you letters'; 'He begs pardon of you'; 'I'll make you unlearn those manners of yours'; 'He asked me for a loan.'¹⁴⁰ I should warn you here that in these senses even passives take a second accusative; in others the genitive is kept. 'You are taught letters by me.' 'They accuse me of theft'; 'I'm accused of theft.' 'You accuse me of sacrilege'; 'I'm accused of sacrilege.'

I know you're not yet appeased; I know you're not yet satisfied in mind. For when would so great a glutton of elegancies be filled?¹⁴¹ But we should spare the guests, not all of whom are equally pleased by these matters. After dinner, while we take a stroll, I'll pay the rest of the bill – unless you think of something else.

Christian As you wish. Let us give thanks to the divine bounty; then we'll take a little walk.

Augustine Well said. Truly nothing's more pleasant, nothing more healthful, than this evening air.

Christian Peter, come over here. Take these things away one by one and fill the cups with wine.

Peter Do you bid me give thanks?

Christian Yes, do so.

5 **Peter** You prefer it in Greek or Latin?

Christian Both ways.

Peter 'We thank thee, heavenly Father, who by thine ineffable power hast created all things; who, ruling the universe by thine inscrutable wisdom, dost feed and nourish the whole creation with thine inexhaustible bounty:
10 grant to thy children that they may one day drink with thee in thy kingdom that nectar of immortality which thou hast promised and prepared for those who truly love thee. Through Jesus Christ, Amen.'¹⁴²

Christian Say the same words in Greek, so¹⁴³ the rest won't understand what you say.

15 **Peter** 'We thank thee, heavenly Father, who by thine ineffable power hast created all things; who, ruling the universe by thine inscrutable wisdom, dost feed and nourish the whole creation with thine inexhaustible bounty: grant to thy children that they may one day drink with thee in thy kingdom that nectar of immortality which thou hast promised and prepared for those
20 who truly love thee. Through Jesus Christ thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen.'

Christian My excellent guests, I thank you for honouring me by coming to my little dinner. I beg you to take it in good part.

Guests We in turn wish to show our gratitude, not merely be grateful.
25 Therefore, let's have no rambling speeches of thanks, but rise and ramble about instead.

Augustine Let's take the young ladies along with us, for then the stroll will be less tiresome.

Christian You're right. If perchance¹⁴⁴ the place lack flowers, let's not lack
30 beauties. Do you prefer to saunter through our gardens, after the fashion of poets,¹⁴⁵ or ramble out yonder towards the stream?

Augustine Your gardens are very charming indeed, but keep that pleasure for morning walks. Streams at sunset are a wonderfully delightful sight.

Christian Lead the way then, Augustine, as befits a poet. I'll take your
35 left.¹⁴⁶

Augustine Good Lord, how many comrades, how large a train, we bring with us! I can't tell you, Christian, how pleased I am. I fancy myself a satrap.

Christian Come, carry out your promise now. Pay what you've pledged.¹⁴⁷

Augustine What do you most want me to say?

40 **Christian** I used to admire many things in Pollio's¹⁴⁸ speech, but above all his way of varying an expression so easily, so readily, so smoothly.

This seems to me a matter not only of unusual talent but also of much experience.

Augustine You are right in admiring that in Pollio, Christian, for he has a wonderful power in this respect; though I incline to think he got it from a certain nimbleness of wit and very extensive practice in speaking and reading and writing rather than from any system or rule.

Christian But I'm looking for some method in this matter if possible.

Augustine It's as I've said. But since I see you're so eager, I'll comply with your wishes as much as I can and try to describe those subtle distinctions

10 I think I've detected in Pollio's discourses.

Christian Come on, I'm most eager.

NOTES

- 1 Augustine] The original edition (November 1518) page 29 has 'Augustinum Baretum.' Bierlaire suggests a play on *barathrum* 'a deep pit,' here meaning 'glutton' as in Horace *Odes* 1.15.31 (ASD I-3 45:423n, 90:418). Chomarat conjectures *birretum* or *baretum*, the cap of a doctor of theology at Paris (*Grammaire et rhétorique* 856 n41); equally plausible perhaps if Baretum is not a proper name. It looks English. About Augustine there can be no doubt; he is Augustinus Vincentius Caminadus. Christian is Christian Northoff. On these friends of Erasmus' university days see the introduction to this book xx-xxii, xxxi.
- 2 The appointed hour; see 'Additional *formulae*' 129:25.
- 3 *Adagia* I ix 52
- 4 Virgil *Eclogues* 5.76-8; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 11.93-4; *Adagia* IV iv 16. *Cicada* is sometimes translated 'cricket,' but it is a tree-cricket, not a house or hearth cricket; it is sometimes confused with a locust also.
- 5 The extremes of gluttony and frugality. Apicius wrote in the first century AD a famous book on cookery, though the extant one called by his name is thought to be spurious. Diogenes the Cynic was contemptuous of all luxury; see 139:8-9 below. On Renaissance interest in Apicius see M.E. Milham 'Apicius in the Northern Renaissance' BHR 32 (1970) 433-43. One of the speakers in 'A Feast of Many Courses' is named Apicius.
- 6 The Fannian law, introduced by the consul C. Fannius in 161 BC, was one of the Roman enactments regulating the amount of money that could be spent on feasts. Erasmus knew of it from Gellius 2.24.1-6. On sumptuary legislation in Erasmus' day see 'The Council of Women' n35 (end). He believed such legislation was proper and necessary; see *Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 598D / ASD IV-1 198:988-93 / CWE 27 268.
- 7 *Adagia* II iv 75
- 8 Augustine describes them, as he readily admits, from the standpoint of an Epicurean; cf 139:3-10 below. For a more complex conception of Epicureanism see the colloquy 'The Epicurean.'
- 9 Zeno was the founder of the Stoic school of philosophy. Cloak and beard were the 'uniform' of philosophers. That some so-called philosophers – like some

modern monks, Erasmus says elsewhere – preached simplicity but failed to practise it is a common gibe in Lucian, often echoed or adapted by Erasmus; see for example *Adagia* I ii 95; *Moriae encomium* LB IV 412A, 461A–463A / ASD IV-3 80:150–5, 144:361–80 / CWE 27 90, 125–6.

- 10 *Asotos* ‘debauched,’ ‘desperate.’ On such men see Cicero *De finibus* 2.23, who borrowed the word from Greek. ‘More debauched than an Asotus’ is a comparison in *De copia* 46 CWE 24 393:6. Erasmus (or his printers) seems to take it as a proper name.
- 11 Name of a slave in Terence *Adelphi* and *Heautontimorumenos*
- 12 *puer* in the original 1518 Froben edition (page 31) and the two editions of 1522, in the March text (g7), in the July–August text (g3). Some later editions have ‘Pe.’ (Schrevelius 1693) or ‘Aug.’ (Rabus 1693). The first of these may be ‘Peter’ or ‘Puer’; the second is ‘Augustine.’ ‘Boy’ is the most common form of address in the *Colloquies* when a master or host gives a message or an order to a servant. In ‘The Poetic Feast’ the host calls a servant ‘mouse’ and his housekeeper by a dozen different mythological names, depending on whether he is pleased or vexed by her (396:16, 404:15, 391:33–8).
- 13 Also in *Precationes* LB V 1210B–C
- 14 In the corrupt Campester edition (on which see ‘Patterns’ n71) ‘capon’ here was changed to ‘rabbit,’ but in Augustine’s reply ‘wings’ was kept (Allen I 11:17–20 / CWE Ep 1341A:373–5).
- 15 Yet . . . touched the cup.] Not in the original (November 1518) edition; added in the March 1522 edition
- 16 A highly esteemed red burgundy mentioned occasionally in Erasmus’ letters; in the *Colloquies* see ‘The Girl with No Interest in Marriage’ 293:2–3 and ‘Cyclops’ 867:11. Louvain wine was evidently inferior stuff but could be mistaken for Beaune by the indiscriminating. Erasmus says elsewhere that Louvain wine was sometimes called Beaune to deceive buyers (*Vita Origenis* LB VIII 431A). In his Cambridge years (1511–13) Erasmus was fond of ‘Greek’ wine (Malmsey?); Allen Epp 234:1–2, 236:14–15, 239:12–13, 240:1–2 / CWE Epp 234:2–3, 236:17–18, 239:15–16, 240:2–3. When later he discovered that burgundy restored him after an attack of the stone (Allen Ep 1342:458–73 / CWE Ep 1342:503–18, written 1523), Beaune became his favourite and the only kind he would willingly drink (Allen Ep 1342:474–85 / CWE Ep 1342:519–38). He could not get along without it; most foods he could not eat, other wines he could not drink; if in his old age he was deprived of Beaune he felt his health was immediately imperilled (Allen Ep 3049:84–5). He was convinced it was good for his fastidious stomach and painful recurrent attacks of kidney stone (Allen Ep 1510:97–8 / CWE Ep 1510:106–8, Allen Ep 2514:16–20) and perhaps gallstones as well (see H. Brabant ‘Erasmus, ses maladies et ses médecins’ in *Colloquia Erasmi Turonensis* I 550–4 and notes). Wherever he lived he tried to make certain Beaune could be readily obtained. More than once he considered moving to France or Burgundy on that account (Allen Ep 1342:493–5 / CWE Ep 1342:539–41, Allen Epp 2410:44–6, 2693:129–32, 2759:17–24). In Holbein’s 1523 portrait of Erasmus now on loan from the Radnor Collection to the National Gallery in London, a glass carafe or decanter rests on a bookshelf behind him. This may symbolize his fondness for Beaune and his faith in its benefits. See Heckscher ‘Reflections on Seeing Holbein’s Portrait of

Erasmus at Longford Castle' ('Benefices' n9) 142–3. William Turner *A Book of Wines* (1568) thinks the red wines of France do more than white wines to cause stone; see the facsimile reprint with an introduction by Sanford V. Larkey (New York 1941) 18–19.

- 17 *nostrates*; here Germans, since Augustine was German
- 18 Christian We've also . . . Lucullan wealth.] Not in the original edition. Lines 29–32 were added in the March 1522 edition; line 33, 'I hear of Lucullan wealth,' in the July–August 1522 edition. Lucullus, the Roman general (c 110–56 BC) who conquered Mithridates, became rich in his campaigns in Asia and was famous for wealth and luxury. Plutarch wrote a life of him. Cf Horace *Epistles* 1.6.40–2.
- 19 Horace *Epodes* 2.47. Cf *Adagia* IV i 62.
- 20 Chrysippus was leader of the Stoic school after Zeno and Cleanthes. In Valerius Maximus *Facta et dicta memorabilia* 8.7 ext 5 the anecdote about Melissa concerns Carneades, not Chrysippus, but is followed by one about Chrysippus.
- 21 See n30 below.
- 22 *Adagia* I x 30: *Scopum attingere* 'To hit the target'; cf II iv 93: *Rem acu tetigisti*.
- 23 Horace *Epistles* 1.5.19, and see *Adagia* IV ix 70.
- 24 Terence *Adelphi* 564
- 25 Paris; cf 139:39 and n46 below.
- 26 *praepostere*; *Adagia* v i 30
- 27 Cf *Adagia* II iii 19, where a line from the verses following is quoted, and see *Moriae encomium* LB IV 415C–416A / ASD IV-3 86:269–73 / CWE 27 93.
- 28 *Epistles* 1.15.18–21
- 29 Horace *Epistles* 1.19.2–3
- 30 In Greek mythology certain nymphs (Naiads) personified water. The ancients used to drink wine neat, Erasmus writes in *Adagia* II ii 96, until one Staphilius introduced dilution of wine with water. Wine mixed with water is more likely to cause a hangover next day, however, says the adage.
- 31 Virgil *Georgics* 2.506
- 32 *Adagia* I x 72, citing Jerome Ep 7.5 (cf Ep 127.9)
- 33 Juvenal 4.140–3; Jerome quotes this in Ep 52.6. The spiny sea-urchin (*oursin*) or *echinus*, still prized as an appetizer, was a table delicacy in antiquity and the subject of much lore. See *Parabolae* CWE 23 219:13, 254:11. *Adagia* II iv 81–3 mention both kinds of *echinus*, the sea-urchin and the land-urchin (hedgehog or porcupine).
- 34 *Adagia* I ii 20
- 35 Epicurean philosopher and gourmet; Horace *Satires* 2.4.1–5, 88–95
- 36 What follows is an ironic allusion to Plato *Gorgias* 462D–465E, where Socrates compares cookery and rhetoric: not true arts but merely routines or knacks to flatter appetites.
- 37 Which victorious Roman generals carried in their triumphal processions
- 38 *De officiis* 1.77
- 39 See 135:10–17 above. Folly accuses the Stoics of being lovers of pleasure but pretending not to be such (LB IV 412E / ASD IV-3 81:2–82:2 / CWE 27 91).
- 40 Founder of the Cyrenaic school and predecessor of Epicurus. He held that pleasure is the sole good, but it must be pleasure that is not productive of pain. On his reputation as a 'man for all seasons' who changed his behaviour to suit

the circumstances see Horace *Epistles* 1.17.23; *Adagia* I iii 86; *Antibarbari* CWE 24 644:31–2.

- 41 Augustine twists the story to suit himself. Alexander said that if he were not Alexander he would prefer to be Diogenes. *Adagia* III iii 1 LB II 771C / CWE 34 263; *De pueris instituendis* LB I 493A / ASD I-2 31:7–11 / CWE 26 303–4; *Apophthegmata* LB IV 175A–B; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 778A, 937F; Allen Ep 393:34–8 / CWE Ep 393:36–40. Erasmus collected sayings attributed to Aristippus and Diogenes in *Apophthegmata* LB IV 165D–192C.
- 42 Both Plato (*Republic* 6.498A–B) and Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1.3 1094b28–1095a11) advise against the study of philosophy before one is physically and intellectually mature.
- 43 To Erasmus the most important branch of philosophy, and the only kind that strongly attracted him, was ethics: moral philosophy leading to wisdom. See Allen Epp 393:17–26 / CWE Ep 393:18–28, Allen Ep 2533:109–13. He disliked and distrusted what he considered the prevalent overemphasis on logic and metaphysics, which he found arid and unprofitable.
- 44 The Stoics were so called because Zeno taught in the Stoa or colonnade in the market-place in Athens.
- 45 Brothers in Terence *Adelphi*, one hated for his harshness and the other loved for his kindness
- 46 Erasmus heard later that this sentence offended some of the French, including Budé (Allen Epp 2261:55–60, 2379:114–26); see also 137:22–5 above and 148:2–5, 152:3–4 below. He denied any intention of making fun of the French, protesting that there was no nation he liked better.
- 47 See 'A Fish Diet' 682:39–686:13.
- 48 *Epistles* 2.2.61–2. Robert Burton quotes these lines in a passage naming Erasmus; *Anatomy of Melancholy* 'Democritus Junior to the Reader' (I 27).
- 49 Terence *Phormio* 454. 'Nothing nowadays is more trite than this Terentian dictum,' Erasmus remarks in *Adagia* I iii 7, where he quotes the Horatian verses too.
- 50 *monogrammmum*, an outline or shadow of a person or object, as Erasmus explains in *Adagia* IV iv 31
- 51 Because the word *monogrammmum* suggests 'single' and Polyphemus the Cyclops had only one eye and was a rough, strong creature
- 52 This was reported of some peoples in the newly discovered lands. See 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 479:31–2.
- 53 Where Erasmus lived 1506–09. Some recollections of what he saw and heard there are found in the *Colloquies*, for example in 'The Godly Feast' 199:5–23, 'A Fish Diet' 713:3–4, 'A Marriage in Name Only' 852:37–853:10, 'Sympathy' 1036:15–1038:15. In 'Penny-Pinching' he combines memories and fiction when describing his life in Venice.
- 54 Juvenal 7.111
- 55 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.129. On Erasmus' interest in this work see CWE 23 xlviii–xlix, 219–77, and the colloquy 'Sympathy.' On contemporary estimates of Pliny see Charles G. Nauert Jr 'Humanists, Scientists, and Pliny: Changing Approaches to a Classical Author' *American Historical Review* 84 (1979) 72–85.
- 56 According to Pliny 8.128
- 57 The slave in Terence *Eunuchus* says he keeps truths but not lies to himself (104–5).

- 58 The tyranny of custom is mentioned also in 'The New Mother' (593:10–12) and 'The Philological Society' (835:8). In other colloquies custom is said to be inviolable, though often irrational ('The Well-to-do Beggars' 479:18–481:6); mistress of every vice ('The Abbot and the Learned Lady' 503:21); the worst authority on good behaviour ('The Abbot and the Learned Lady' 503:20, 'The New Mother' 595:11–13); sometimes stronger than law ('A Fish Diet' 695:10–17, and see n130); different in different societies ('Inns' 372:28–32, 'A Fish Diet' 708:40–711:4, 'The Lover of Glory' 970:31–9, 'Penny-Pinching' 988:32).
- 59 Virgil *Georgics* 1.145–6; *Adagia* III ii 53
- 60 On this expression see *Adagia* III ii 56. It is repeated in Christian's reply.
- 61 *Naturalis historia* 8.114, following Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9.5 611b30–1
- 62 *Andria* 933
- 63 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.217
- 64 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.219
- 65 See introduction 132 above.
- 66 Catullus 23
- 67 From familiar ancient lore about geese: Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.51; Livy 5.47.3–4; Plutarch *Moralia* 325C–D *De fortuna Romanorum*; Aelian *De natura animalium* 12.33
- 68 Whether this name too is borrowed from an acquaintance of Erasmus is not known.
- 69 cock] *gallus* in the original (November 1518) and final authorized edition (March 1533), *Gallus* in the 1522 editions. (This is Theodore's only utterance in the dialogue.)
- 70 On the puns in the preceding lines see 'Patterns' n71 and 'Additional formulae' n8. If the 1522 reading *Gallus* (see preceding note) is correct, the three meanings found in the other passages – 'cock' (fowl), 'Gaul' (Frenchman), and 'cock' (priest of Cybele) are present in these lines. But *gallus gallaceus* has not been explained. Augustine invites guesses but offers no assistance, nor does Christian play Oedipus by solving the riddle. As a proper name *Gallaceus* means Galician, referring to the region in north-western Spain where gold was mined (Martial 4.39.7, 10.16.3–4, 14.95.1). *Gallus gallaceus* may be 'golden cockerel,' perhaps a sly intimation that Theodore is a *bon vivant*.
- 71 In Greek legend he won the throne of Thebes by solving the riddle proposed by the Sphinx: 'What walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening?'
- 72 Cf 'Patterns' 18:16–22.
- 73 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.52; Athenaeus 9.384b–c
- 74 On these delicacies see Athenaeus: artichokes 2.70a–d; snails 2.63a–d; tortoise 8.337b, conger eels 7.288b–f, 293c–294c; toadstools, mushrooms, truffles 2.60b–62d.
- 75 See the story in 'The Fabulous Feast' 579:9–580:7.
- 76 Ballast ... absorbing of wine.] None of the material from here to 146:18 appeared in the original printed text (November 1518). Part of it was added in the March 1522 edition (h5 verso–h6 verso; ASD I-3 206:2657–208:2706) but it was later revised and expanded to its present form in the July–August 1522 edition (h1 verso–h4; see ASD I-3 227:1–230:119). 'The Profane Feast' does not condemn ecclesiastical regulations, Erasmus insisted, but exposes superstitions ('The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1101:1–4).

Defending it a decade after publication, he repeats that if read properly it would offend no one; as usual he complains of critics who lift words out of context, ignore the nature of dialogue, and fail to discriminate among the speakers (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* [1532] LB IX 933D–934B). When Nicolaas Baechem attacked the *Colloquies* of 1522 (see ‘Rash Vows’ n14) Erasmus maintained in a letter to a member of the imperial council that the sole question in dispute here was whether the intentions of pontifical ordinances were to bind people under penalty of hell-fire, a question only the pope, not Baechem, could answer (Allen Ep 1300:29–37 / CWE Ep 1300:32–9). At the same time he protested to the theologians of Louvain against Baechem’s slanders, asserting that the offending passages dealt not with fasting itself but with the implications of obligatory ordinances, for ‘if any pontifical or episcopal constitution whatever exposes us to the penalty of hell-fire, the position of Christians is hard indeed’ (Allen Ep 1301:66–7 / CWE Ep 1301:121–2). On Baechem’s attack on ‘The Profane Feast’ see Bierlaire ‘Le *Libellus Colloquiorum* de mars 1522 et Nicolas Baechem dit Egmondanus’ in *Scrinium Erasmianum* 1 55–81. The questions raised here are resumed and elaborated in ‘The Godly Feast’ and especially ‘A Fish Diet.’

Baechem was identified with Louvain. Further attacks on ‘The Profane Feast’ came from the other and even greater centre of theology, the University of Paris. There the faculty of theology, after intermittent examination of the *Colloquies* and other writings by Erasmus, passed a motion (May 1526) that the reading of this work be ‘forbidden to all and especially to youth’ (LB IX 929A; the text of the faculty’s censure is reprinted in LB IX 928E–954E, appended to Erasmus’ *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* replying to the faculty’s criticism of many passages in his books). The Paris theologians rebuked Erasmus for complaining about meatless days enjoined by the church ‘as though those interfered with Christian freedom’ (LB IX 933B). They specify 143:21–31, 145:23, 146:1–5 here (LB IX 933B–C). As for 143:21–31, Erasmus objects that this colloquy was published originally without his knowledge and to his annoyance. (True, of course, but he was responsible for the 1522 texts.) Critics must not assume that he necessarily agrees with the remarks of Augustine and Christian. In fact Christian’s response in 143:32–7 to Augustine’s comment on the ‘Judaism’ of dietary restrictions is a refutation of Augustine’s light talk (LB IX 929D–F). In any event the utterances of an imagined speaker, however rash or absurd, should not be taken as unquestionably those of the author – a point Erasmus always stressed and often in vain. Even so, he adds, Augustine says nothing improper (LB IX 934A).

77 Augustine] In the March 1522 edition this line is erroneously given to Christian. In the next edition, July–August 1522, and thereafter it is spoken by Augustine.

78 On this aversion see ‘A Fish Diet,’ particularly 713:18–714:33.

79 Aloe and scammony are plants used as drastic purgatives. Wormwood oil is notoriously bitter.

80 Titus 1:15

81 Cf ‘A Fish Diet’ 683:3–5. In Plato *Phaedrus* 246A–B the soul is compared to a pair of winged horses, one good, the other unruly, and a charioteer who must control them.

82 Aesopus, son of a famous actor, squandered his father’s fortune by notorious extravagances; see Horace *Satires* 2.3.239. On Apicius see n5 above.

- 83 *murenae*. The moray (or murrey) is sometimes confused with the lamprey; which one Erasmus meant by *murena* is uncertain, and his translators or commentators seem equally uncertain, for the same fish might have different names in various regions along the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts. Morays are eels, lampreys are very similar to eels; both were delicacies to the Romans, as were the scarus or parrot-fish and sturgeon (Horace *Satires* 2.2.21, 47; Martial 13.84; Macrobius 3.15–16; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.29). Pliny says that ‘of old the sturgeon was considered the noblest of fish’ but that ‘nowadays’ scarus is the most highly prized (9.60, 62). See D’Arcy W. Thompson *A Glossary of Greek Fishes* (London 1947).
- 84 Erasmus uses a Greek term (βουλιμίαν) probably borrowed from Aristotle *Problemata* 8.9 888a1.
- 85 *Odyssey* 12.342. In *Adagia* III vi 43 Erasmus, following Plato *Republic* 3.390b, denies that such a death is the most miserable, for the death of the soul is worse than any physical death.
- 86 *Pontifex* (high priest of the Romans) meant, essentially, ‘bishop’ in Christian Latin. Erasmus sometimes uses it alone to mean ‘pope’ (as in ‘Youth’ 97:2, where the Latin has *pontifices, episcopos, apostolos*), but usually he designates the pope by *Romanus pontifex* or *summus pontifex*. In this passage ‘pontiffs’ means popes; note the allusion by Augustine at 146:8–9, to a triple crown.
- 87 This point is amusingly debated in ‘A Fish Diet’ 678:31–681:6. In *Ecclesiastes* Erasmus lists some disadvantages and dangers of fasting that a preacher should consider if he intends to praise it, for there are arguments on both sides of the question (LB V 897A–B).
- 88 On interaction of mind and body see ‘The New Mother’ 596:24–600:4.
- 89 Matt 12:1–2; Mark 2:23–3:5; Luke 6:1–9, 14:3–6. See ‘The Godly Feast’ 188:8–41.
- 90 1 Cor 10:24; cf ‘The Godly Feast’ 190:11–12.
- 91 *magister noster*, often used in the plural in ironic or satirical allusion to pretentious and benighted academic dignitaries
- 92 Augustine] The name of the speaker, obviously Augustine, is omitted in the edition of March 1533.
- 93 Another passage condemned by the faculty of theology at Paris, which denied that fasts enjoined by the church offended Christian freedom. See n76 above. The quotation is from 1 Cor 13:7.
- 94 On these important topics see ‘A Fish Diet’ 689:27–702:37.
- 95 *offendiculum*, as in 1 Cor 8:9 (Vulg)
- 96 Although condemned by the theologians, this paragraph is ‘not wholly absurd’ according to Erasmus, who calls attention to Christian’s ironic response. Christian knows how to take Augustine’s words; unfortunately some of Erasmus’ impercipient readers do not (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 934A–B).
- 97 The papal tiara. See *Julius exclusus* (Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 66:28n / CWE 27 168 n5).
- 98 *Articulus* was sometimes a technical term meaning a complaint entered in an ecclesiastical court. The Sorbonne was never identical with the faculty of theology in the University of Paris, although theological disputations and lectures did take place there. Nevertheless that faculty and that college were

often named in Erasmus' time and long afterwards as though they were one and the same (even in the index to Allen, xii 150). Allusions to the Sorbonne here show that on some informal occasions at least Erasmus uses 'Sorbonne' as synonymous with the 'faculty of theology.' But when dealing with those theologians' strictures upon his writings he is careful to employ the correct term.

- 99 The puns hold in English as in Latin. Contemporary readers would have caught an allusion to well known jokes about *vin théologal* and the reputed fondness of theologians at the Sorbonne for copious drinking. In 'Of Experience,' Montaigne says the *vin théologal* of the Sorbonne became proverbial, 'like their banquets' (*Essays* 3.13; Frame 851). Impatience and irritation with the Sorbonne's hostility to reform and to what Erasmus likes to call *bonae literae* often find expression in his writings, but the sheer prestige of Parisian theologians made them a factor he could not ignore in controversy, however much he satirizes them elsewhere.

On intellectual and religious currents in the University of Paris 1494–1517, consult Renaudet *Préréforme et humanisme*. On the work, organization, and personnel of the faculty of theology 1500–43, see Farge *Orthodoxy and Reform*. For the earlier history of the University of Paris a selection of documents is available in Thorndike *University Records*.

- 100 The revised and enlarged passage beginning at 143:16 ends here.
- 101 Quoted by Gellius 13.11.1–5 in commenting on Varro's *Nescis quid vesper serus vehat* 'You don't know what the evening's close may bring.' Varro's prescriptions for agreeable dining – including careful choice of guests neither too talkative nor too taciturn, and conversation diverting and profitable without being disturbing or perplexing – are standards observed in all *convivia* in the *Colloquies*.
- 102 Nine is the standard but not invariable number of guests (*Adagia* i iii 97). In 'The Godly Feast' the host and eight others, some of them 'shadows,' are present (on 'shadows' see 'Additional *formulae*' 124:25–6 and n24). In 'The Fabulous Feast' nine guests attend; a tenth person, evidently unexpected, arrives just at the end. In 'The Sober Feast' there are nine guests. Comparison of the number of Graces and the Muses with the number of guests is also from Varro (Gellius 13.11.1–2). On planning a dinner see 'A Feast of Many Courses.'
- 103 See introduction 132 above.
- 104 Augustine jests, but the symbolism of laureation was no trifling matter. See Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 39–40; J.B. Trapp in 'The Owl's Ivy and the Poet's Bays' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 21 (1958) 227–55.
- 105 On the name 'Erasmus' in this dialogue see introduction 132 above and 'Erasmus and Erasmus' 1120–1. Erasmus and More had been close friends since Erasmus' first visit to England in 1499. No record exists of a visit by More to Germany, nor could he have met Erasmus before 1499. Lines 15–18 are in the original edition (November 1518), but because the oldest material in that edition presumably antedates their acquaintance, More's name must have been inserted after 1499. See Allen Epp 114 introduction and 130:92n. The history of Erasmus' friendship with More, often told, is summarized by E.E. Reynolds *Thomas More and Erasmus* (London 1965).

'Marriage' and 'Exorcism' have anecdotes about More, but he is not named in them. See the introductions to those colloquies.

- 106 The usual formula at the end of a play
- 107 From good to bad or better to worse; *Adagia* I vii 29. Cf 'The Old Men's Chat' 455:19–22 and n52. For the opposite change, see *Adagia* II viii 47.
- 108 *pruna cerea*; Virgil *Eclogues* 2.53
- 109 Martial 5.18
- 110 You'll find . . . cheapest.] Added in the March 1533 edition, perhaps to mollify Budé and others who seem to have been annoyed by the preceding remarks (see n46 above).
- 111 *Adagia* IV iv 40; Horace *Odes* 4.12.22–3
- 112 'A warning that we should either accommodate ourselves to time and place or withdraw from human society' (*Adagia* I x 47). The phrase is in Greek in the text.
- 113 Whose fondness for drink was notorious. See 'Inns' 374:29–30: 'They admire heavy drinkers.'
- 114 See 152:33–7, 153:38 below.
- 115 *secundis mendis*; cf Cicero *Ad Atticum* 14.6.2 and Virgil *Georgics* 2.101.
- 116 All the exercises from here to 152:32, like those in 'Copiousness' that follow, are illustrations of varying and amplifying, which are marks of *copia*.
- 117 A verbal noun of the fourth declension
- 118 See *De copia* 72 CWE 24:443–5. The examples of idiomatic usage in language about costs and values, buying and selling, and the like are appropriate to the occasion, since allusions to topics of this kind have already occurred at the supper party.
- 119 See introduction 132 above.
- 120 They'll . . . me!] Added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 121 Some of the examples in these passages are used also in *De constructione* LB I 170B–C / ASD I-4 123:61–73.
- 122 *vigenis libris Francicis*. *Libra* (pound) became French *livre*.
- 123 Character in Terence *Andria*, *Heautontimorumenos*, and *Phormio*
- 124 A slave in Plautus *Mercator*
- 125 *decem scutatis*. Latin *scutatum* or *scutum* was the French *scute* or *écu*, a coin worth about three livres.
- 126 *Abi in malam rem*; Plautus *Persa* 288
- 127 Cf 'The Fabulous Feast' 582:5–41.
- 128 Note 123 above
- 129 After this sentence, the original edition (November 1518) and the March 1519 edition (Louvain: Martens) have: 'But when you read these elegancies of your Erasmus you'll understand this form better. For he has explained it very clearly' (ASD I-3 58:852–3, 101:486–7). See n141 below.
- 130 On these common idioms see *Adagia* I viii 47.
- 131 See *De copia* 71 CWE 24 441–3. A few of these examples are used also in *De constructione* LB I 169F–170A / ASD I-4 122:52–68.
- 132 Juvenal 3.30
- 133 Cf Suetonius *Nero* 30. What six hundred thousand sesterces would be worth today cannot be stated exactly. 'An enormous sum,' proof of incredible profligacy, is what we are to understand. One of Erasmus' earlier editors, Peter

- Rabus, in his edition (Rotterdam 1693) reckoned this number of sesterces might equal forty-five thousand Dutch florins; but this is *ignotum per ignotius*.
- 134 See n46 above. The liard was a coin of slight value, one fourth of a sou. To dine for a liard would be like dining for a farthing.
- 135 *Eunuchus*
- 136 As Erasmus warns in 'Early to Rise'
- 137 He was bribed by the Milesians to refrain from speaking against them; Gellius 11.9.
- 138 *De copia* 75 CWĒ 24 447–9 has many of the idioms used in the following lines.
- 139 Courting public favour, a political offence called *ambitus*, was heinous because it was often accompanied by bribery. If Polybius (6.56) is correct, bribery at Rome was punishable by death. Scipio Africanus Major's extravagance, when aedile, in celebrating the Roman Games in 213 BC (Livy 25.2) was one of the first examples of what became, in spite of laws, an ever-growing expenditure on 'bread and circuses' to placate or bribe the populace. *Ambitus* was 'what churchmen call simony in sacred matters' (Erasmus *Paraphrasis in Elegantias Laurentii Vallae* ASD I-4 222:418–9).
- 140 The same examples of double accusative occur in *De constructione* LB I 173A / ASD I-4 128:207.
- 141 filled? But we should spare . . .] Between these two sentences the November 1518 (Basel: Johann Froben) and March 1519 (Louvain: Martens) editions have: 'Read the commentaries of Erasmus; if they won't satisfy you, you'll never be satisfied' (ASD I-3 60:893–4, 103:886–7). The 'commentaries' must be 'Copiousness' or other primitive material of *De copia*.
- 142 Like the grace before meals (135:20–1 above), this one is printed also in Erasmus' *Precationes* LB V 1210C–D. For other graces, see 'The Godly Feast' 183:1–5, 203:1–4.
- 143 so . . . you say] Both of the 1522 editions repeat this prayer in Greek (March edition at i4 verso; July–August edition at i1 recto–1 verso), but only the July–August edition adds the reason: 'so the rest won't understand what you say.'
- 144 If perchance . . . beauties.] Added in the August 1523 edition
- 145 Horace *Epistles* 1.4.4
- 146 'Additional *formulae*' n29
- 147 148:6–20 and n114, 152:33–7 above
- 148 Pollio's] 'Erasmus' in the November 1518 edition (page 62 there, misnumbered 52). Here and at 154:3 and 10 'Erasmus' again occurs in the original edition as well as the March 1519 edition (Louvain: Martens). The name is changed to 'Pollio' in the March 1522 and subsequent editions. Asinius Pollio (first century BC) was equally distinguished in political and literary circles; 'a man for all seasons' (Quintilian 6.3.110).

A SHORT RULE FOR COPIOUSNESS

Brevis de copia praeceptio

First printed in the November 1518 edition.

Although linked by a few transitional phrases to what immediately precedes it and therefore a part of 'The Profane Feast,' this colloquy had a separate title even in the original edition, as though it were a separate composition. Parts of it were in hand as early as May 1499 (Allen Ep 260 introduction). It was the first version of what Erasmus expanded into *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum*, which was finally worked into shape for St Paul's School and published in 1512, along with *De ratione studii* and a few minor works. See CWE 24 280–3.

De copia was notably successful, became widely used, and was reprinted at least 150 times in the sixteenth century. As a standard manual it influenced pedagogical practices and affected ideas on composition and style for generations. *Copia*, a conception deriving largely from Cicero and Quintilian, is abundance of expression, resourcefulness in language – evident for example in amplification, variety, and synonymy. It is 'twofold' because it embraces not only *copia verborum* or power of expression but *copia rerum* or knowledge and control of subject-matter as well: 'rerum copia verborum copiam gignit,' as Cicero wrote (*De oratore* 3.125). Thus considered, *copia* was both a principle and an instrument of grammar-school training, which in turn provided the basis for a literary education, the kind Erasmus and his contemporaries believed in and about which the humanist educators wrote so much. When followed intelligently and practised diligently, the prescriptions of *De copia* were expected to enable one to learn the art of composition, primarily in Latin but in one's own language as well. For successful students the ultimate goal, the grand achievement of such training was eloquence, as ideal eloquence was conceived by Cicero and Quintilian: the ability of a virtuous man to discourse persuasively on any subject. Nothing is more impressive or more magnificent (*De copia* LB I 3A / CWE 24 295). As an English schoolmaster wrote not many years before the publication of *De copia*, 'Eliquens is a gay thing be the wich a man ma expresse all the consetes of his mynd with grett abundance and diversite of speche, but yet me semeth eloqua[ns] withowt wisdom doth a man but lityll good, for wisdom is the fundation of eloquens as it is of all other thynges' (an English *vulgaria* of c 1500; see Nicholas Orme 'An Early-Tudor Oxford Schoolbook' *Renaissance Quarterly* 34 (1981) 25 no 20). Hannah H. Gray 'Renaissance Humanism: The Pursuit of Eloquence' *Journal*

of the *History of Ideas* 24 (1963) 494–514 and Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* II 712–61 do much to make the principles and purposes of *De copia* intelligible and convincing.

These large and complex matters, however, are merely intimated or implied in the few pages of this colloquy. They are set forth in the completed work, *De copia*, which is translated by Betty Knott into English for the first time in CWE 24. For studies of *De copia* see CWE 23 xxxiii n48. To the writings named there must be added Terence Cave *The Cornucopian Text* (Oxford 1979) and Betty Knott 'Erasmus' Use of Sources in *De copia* *Erasmus in English* 11 (1981–2) 2–6.

Of course eloquence depended upon linguistic precision as well as abundance and variety. The best modern guide to accurate classical usage, in the judgment of Erasmus, was Lorenzo Valla's *Elegantiae linguae Latinae* (c 1444; first printed 1471). Erasmus made an abstract of this very important work as early as c 1488, another some years later; neither was intended for publication. Finally in 1531 he issued an authentic, authorized *Paraphrasis sive epitome* of the *Elegantiae* (Freiburg; Faber Emmeus); text in LB I 1069A–1126C / ASD I-4 191–351; and see Ep 2416. He included Valla among those who deserved to be remembered forever (Allen Ep 1347:208–9 / CWE Ep 1347:225–7).

AUGUSTINE, CHRISTIAN

Augustine I'm ready.¹ In the first place, the subject itself must be expressed in pure, choice Latin words² – an achievement of no little skill, since there
 5 are a good many persons who somehow or other aim at richness and variety of diction when they can't express the thing properly even once. As if having blundered once weren't enough, they make their blundering still worse by variations, as though they had accepted a challenge to speak as barbarously as possible. And thus in their clumsy way they pile up synonyms sometimes
 10 so ill matched that they themselves will wonder how they came together. What would be sillier than for a beggar, who hasn't a stitch of clothing he can put on without shame, to change his rags at regular intervals nonetheless and show off his beggarliness for wealth? But these enthusiasts for variation seem no less absurd. Though they've said a thing barbarously once, they
 15 repeat the same thing much more barbarously – over and over again and worse every time. This is *copia* in solecisms, not in diction.

First of all, then, as I said, the subject itself must be set forth in choice and appropriate words. Next, say it in different words, if any are found that convey the same meaning; there are plenty of these. After that, when
 20 individual synonyms fail you must use metaphors,³ provided the metaphor

is not an extravagant one. When you run out of these you'll have to shift to passives (if you've been speaking in the active voice). They afford fully as many expressions as the actives provided. Then we'll change the verbs, if you like, either into verbal nouns or participles. Last of all, when we've
 5 changed adverbs into nouns, then nouns into various parts of speech, we'll say it in an opposite way: either⁴ change affirmative speech into negative or the reverse, or put a positive statement into the form of a question. Now, for the sake of example, let's take this sentence:

10 YOUR LETTER PLEASED ME VERY MUCH

Your Letter

Epistle, note, writing, sheets, letter.

15 *Very Much*

In marvellous fashion, wonderfully, exceedingly, to the highest degree, greatly, not a little, extremely, most exceedingly.

Me

20 My soul, my breast, my eyes, my heart, Christian.⁵

Pleased

Stirred with pleasure, refreshed, gladdened, was a pleasure, delighted, filled me with pleasure, was honey-sweet, most pleasurable, etc.

25

You have the material; it will be yours to arrange it. Let's try, then. Let's make trial of it.

Christian Your letter pleased me very much. Your epistle gladdened me wonderfully.

30 **Augustine** Turn the active into passive; the form will change, as, 'It is impossible to say how gladdened I was by your writing.'

Forming the Same Likewise through Other Verbs

I got incredible pleasure from your letter. I received a great deal of pleasure
 35 from your Highness' letter. Your words brought me no little joy. Your words quite overwhelmed me with joy. (Here you couldn't change into the passive except in the last part, 'was overwhelmed with joy,' which is common usage. 'Pleasure was taken by me,' 'joy was afforded,' wouldn't be so idiomatic.)

40 *Through the Verb 'Move'*

Your letter moved me with singular pleasure.

*Change into Passive*⁶

I was given incredible pleasure by your letter. Your note produced no little joy for us.

5 *Through the Verb 'to be' and Noun Adjectives*⁷

Your letter was in many ways most pleasing to me. Your letter was very much appreciated.

*Through Noun Substantives*⁸

10 Your letter was an unspeakable pleasure to us. Your letter was an incredible source of happiness.

Change into Negative

'Your letter was no small joy.' 'Nothing in my life more pleasing than your
 15 letter has befallen me.' However, this method – which is not to be carelessly neglected – is one we've used many times already. Whenever we wish to signify 'much,' 'very much,' 'singularly,' we'll get the same thing by a negative, as: 'Henry loves you violently.' 'He loves you in no common fashion.' 'Wine pleases me much.' 'It pleases me not a little.' 'He's a man
 20 of singular talent.' 'He's a man of no common talent.' 'He's a man to be admired for learning.' 'He's a man of no mean learning.' 'Thomas was born of the highest rank among his peers.' 'Born not of lowly station.' 'Augustine was most eloquent.' 'He was not lacking in eloquence.' 'Carneades⁹ was a noble orator,' 'not ignoble,' 'not obscure.' And others of this kind, which are
 25 in constant use. But to have called attention to a matter that is quite clear is enough. You should be aware that we use this sort of diction in two ways: for the sake of modesty, especially if we're talking of ourselves, and for the sake of amplifying. For we say correctly and elegantly, 'not ungrateful' for 'very grateful,' 'not commonly' for 'singularly.'

30

For the Sake of Modesty

'My writing has won me some reputation for learning.' 'I've always taken pains not to hold the last place in literary reputation.' The above are examples of amplification.

35

Now to resume: 'Nothing more gratifying than your letter ever befell me.' 'Nothing ever gave me greater pleasure than your letter.' 'I never took so much pleasure in anything as in your very lovely letter.' Each of the above expressions could have been varied by being put in the form of a
 40 question, in this fashion: 'What in life could have been more pleasing than your letter?' 'What ever happened to me sweeter than your epistle?' 'What

ever so delighted me as did your latest letter?’ In this manner you’ll be able to vary almost every expression anew.

Christian What comes next?

Augustine Now let’s change the whole style a little more freely, in order to
5 paraphrase one expression in many words.

Christian Give an example.

Augustine By adding some words we’ll change a single phrase, now by the word ‘incredible’ and again by the adverb ‘incredibly.’ ‘I couldn’t put into words how delighted I was by your letter.’ And ‘It would be hard for me to
10 write, and for you to believe, how great a pleasure your letter was to me.’ ‘I can in no way express how overjoyed I was by your letter.’ And so on, *ad infinitum*. Again, by another means. Thus far we’ve varied by negation, interrogation, and finally by countless expressions. Now we’ll vary through subjunctives¹⁰ or conditionals in this way: ‘Let me die if there was ever
15 anything more welcome or sweeter than your letter.’ ‘Let me perish if there was anything that gave me greater pleasure than your letter.’ ‘So help me God, nothing more agreeable than your letter has befallen me in my life.’ And you’ll be able to think up many others also in this way.

Christian What next?

Augustine Now we should hurry on to metaphors, comparisons, and
20 examples.

Metaphor¹¹ Is in These

‘I received your letter, which was honeyed.’ ‘Your letter seems to me sheer
25 delight.’ ‘Your letter is sheer pleasure.’ And many more of this sort. But we should be careful to avoid metaphors that are obsolete or too far-fetched, like this one: ‘Jove spit with white snow on the wintry Alps.’¹² And like this: ‘The banquet of your letter refreshed us with most delightful dishes.’

Comparison by Simile¹³

‘Your letter was more delectable than all ambrosia or nectar.’¹⁴ ‘Your letter was sweeter to me than any honey.’ ‘Your kind epistle far surpassed all carob¹⁵ and Attic honey and sugar, nectar, and ambrosia of the gods.’
30 Whatever is enhanced by sweetness can be utilized here.

By Example

‘I’ll never be persuaded to believe Hero received a letter from her beloved Leander¹⁶ with greater pleasure or more kisses than I received yours.’ ‘I’ll scarcely believe Scipio¹⁷ had a more splendid triumph when Carthage was
40 overthrown, or Aemilius Paulus when Perseus was captured, than I had as soon as the carrier delivered your sweetest letter to me.’¹⁸ From stories and

chronicles of this kind, innumerable examples can be found. Comparisons of things are taken from natural science;¹⁹ you must memorize the qualities of a great many of them. Now, if you please, let's try it in another sentence.

5 I'LL NEVER FORGET YOU AS LONG AS I LIVE

As long as I live, I'll always remember you. As long as I live, forgetfulness of you will never take hold of me. I shall sooner cease to live than forget you.

10 *By Comparisons*

If the body can escape its shadow, this heart also will be able to forget you. Not even the Lethean stream²⁰ will be able to wash away your memory.

In Addition: Through the Impossible,²¹ or, in Poetic Fashion,

15 *Through Opposites*

'As long as the boar loves the mountain ridges, / As long as fish the stream.'²² 'Sooner, then, the fleet,' etc²³ – which isn't much trouble to think up. But lest we seem excessive, let's be content with these for the present. At another time, if you wish, we'll have a longer talk on this subject.

20

Christian I kept thinking you had now exhausted the subject, Augustine, but contrary to my expectation you've revealed a new source of wealth. If you proceed to elucidate it, night will be upon us before you run out of words on this matter.

25 **Augustine** If I provide this with my modest learning and talent, how much do you think Cicero himself could have accomplished, when he is said to have rivalled the actor Roscius?²⁴ – But the sun has left us; the air grows damp. Best to imitate the little birds and take to house and bed. Farewell, therefore, my dearest Christian, until tomorrow.

30 **Christian** Farewell to you likewise, Augustine, most learned of men.

NOTES

1 The following statement of requirements for *copia* is a brief outline of the opening chapters (1–9) of *De copia* CWE 24 297–304. The illustrations also anticipate a portion of it: the remarkable demonstration of varying the sentence *Litterae tuae magnopere me delectarunt* 'Your letter pleased me very much' (see Cicero *Ad familiares* 9.16.1) in 141 different ways and of the sentence *Semper dum vivam tui meminero* 'Always, as long as I live, I shall remember you' (in praise of More) in 200 ways. Cf CWE 24 348:13–364:26.

2 *De copia* 11–13 CWE 24:307:9–329:33 discusses classes of words and synonyms.

3 *De copia* 16 CWE 24 331:1–336:3

- 4 either] The original edition (November 1518) has *ut* 'in order to' instead of *aut* 'either' and may be what Erasmus intended. See ASD I-3 62:22n.
- 5 Christian] 'Erasmus' in editions earlier than August 1523
- 6 Change . . . for us.] Only the first sentence is passive and only the original edition (1518) page 67 adds 'Beware of changing into passive' after the second sentence.
- 7 The old term for what are now called simply 'adjectives'
- 8 What are now called 'nouns' or 'substantives'
- 9 Greek philosopher of the Sceptic school (second century BC) and founder of the New Academy
- 10 Optative subjunctives
- 11 *translatio*; see *De copia* 16 CWE 24 333-4.
- 12 A notorious line by one Furius, censured by Horace *Satires* 2.5.41. See Quintilian 8.6.17 and *De copia* 11 CWE 24 314:3-4.
- 13 *De copia* CWE 24 641:5-642:15. See *Parabolaes sive similia* CWE 23:124-277.
- 14 *Adagia* III i 91
- 15 *siliqua*, the fruit of the carob tree. *Siliquae* are the prodigal son's food, 'the husks that the swine did eat,' in Luke 15:16 but not accounted a delicacy there as they are in Erasmus' passage. Said to have been identified also with the 'locusts and wild honey' eaten by John the Baptist (Matt 3:4; Mark 1:6) and hence called 'St John's bread.' This word cost Erasmus a long note in his *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* (LB VI 18E-20C).
- 16 His to Hero and her letter to Leander were Ovid's contributions (*Heroides* 18, 19) to the famous love story told by Musaeus.
- 17 Scipio Aemilianus (Publius Cornelius Scipio, known as Africanus Minor) besieged and destroyed Carthage in the third Punic war 146 BC. His father, Aemilius Paulus, had conquered Macedonia and captured the king, Perseus, in the battle of Pydna 168 BC. Anecdotes of Aemilius Paulus are told in *Apophthegmata* LB IV 259B-260A.
- 18 This sentence appears in a letter (not to Erasmus) by Erasmus' friend Cornelis Gerard c April 1499. Allen believed that Erasmus probably quotes it from Gerard, but where or how Erasmus saw the letter is not clear (Allen Ep 260 introduction).
- 19 Erasmus' *Parabolaes* is a storehouse of examples. In *Antibarbari* CWE 23 96:22-3 Erasmus quotes with approval St Augustine on the utility of a knowledge of natural history for students of Scripture. *De ratione studii* emphasizes such knowledge in liberal education (CWE 24 673:24-675:3).
- 20 The river of forgetfulness in Hades; Virgil *Aeneid* 6.703-51
- 21 Greek in the text of the August 1523 edition and thereafter
- 22 Virgil *Eclogues* 5.76-7
- 23 Virgil *Eclogues* 1.60
- 24 The famous comic actor. See Macrobius *Saturnalia* 3.14.12; *Adagia* IV vii 69; *De copia* CWE 24 297:27-298:2. For Cicero's tribute to Roscius see *Pro Archia* 8.17 and cf *De oratore* 1.27.124-5, 1.59.251, 254, 258.

THE GODLY FEAST

Convivium religiosum

First printed in part in the March 1522 edition, completely in the later 1522 edition.

MS Thottske Saml 73 Fol, one of three important Erasmian autograph codices in the Royal Library at Copenhagen, contains the text of this colloquy except for introductory passages, which fill only two and a half pages in the March 1522 edition (k2 verso–3 verso). The rest of the colloquy except for one line (see n17 below) was added in the next edition, July–August 1522 (i7 verso–n1 verso), but Erasmus made some alterations and additions, most of them slight, before giving it to the printer. These changes are listed in the critical apparatus in ASD; the more important ones are reported in notes to the present translation.

For detailed description of the manuscript see C. Reedijk ‘Three Erasmus Autographs in the Royal Library at Copenhagen’ *Studia bibliographica in honorem Herman de la Fontaine Verwey* ed S. van der Woude (Amsterdam 1968) 327–49; on ‘The Godly Feast’ 342, 346.

Allen infers that the later 1522 edition was published c August (Epp 1262 introduction, 1294:10–11 and 11n). Smith (*Key* 10) says ‘summer,’ ASD ‘July–August.’ An exact date cannot be determined, since the volume bears no month-date, but the summer of 1522 is certain; see Allen Ep 1311:46–8 / CWE Ep 1311:38–40.

No small part of the charm and plausibility of this dialogue derives from its setting. So common were gardens and country houses as the scene of dialogues in Renaissance as in classical literature that the debt of Erasmus to literary tradition in his descriptions of Eusebius’ house and grounds is easily recognized. We need look no further than Horace’s Sabine farm or Cicero’s villa at Tusculum for models. Do the villa and gardens described so carefully in ‘The Godly Feast’ owe anything to those Erasmus knew in his own experience as well as in literary precedents? No doubt it is safe to assume that this modest rural estate (*praediolum suburbanum*) where Eusebius entertains his guests combines features of more than one place Erasmus himself knew. These would not include More’s house in Chelsea, for More did not acquire that property before 1523. Nor would it include the lodge that Colet planned to build for his retirement on the grounds of the Charterhouse at Sheen near Richmond. Colet told Erasmus in October 1514 that this house was nearly finished, but Erasmus writes in 1521 that Colet’s death, which was preceded by illnesses, defeated his hope of leisurely retirement (Allen Epp

314:10–11, 1211:371–8 / CWE Epp 314:11–12, 1211:405–11). Even if Colet had a lodging at the Charterhouse, there is no evidence that Erasmus visited him there.

In some respects the interior of Eusebius' house resembles that of Erasmus' friend Johann von Botzheim, canon of Constance, where Erasmus was a guest in September 1522. In a letter of February 1523 he calls this house an abode of the Muses, where everything is neat, elegant, and expressive. Some of his phrases describing its attractions remind one of those used in 'The Godly Feast' (Allen Ep 1342:336–54 / CWE Ep 1342:372–90). Since the complete colloquy was in print by September 1522, resemblance between Botzheim's house and the one created by Erasmus for Eusebius must be ascribed to coincidence of taste in kindred minds. Memories of other houses, too, for example the splendid mansion of Jérôme de Busleyden in Mechelen, may have contributed something to Eusebius' villa. (On Botzheim and Busleyden see CEBR.)

If he wrote nearly all of this colloquy after November 1521, as is most likely, Erasmus must surely have included memories of the pleasant country house and garden at Anderlecht, near Brussels, where he spent the summer of 1521 contentedly (Allen Epp 1208:1n, 1215:2–4, 1216:81–2, 1223:1–13 / CWE Epp 1208 introduction, 1215:3–6, 1216:86–7, 1223:2–16). Basel itself provided gardens he knew well and had long enjoyed. The setting is so particularized that, as Wackernagel and others have suggested, Erasmus is probably drawing on his own knowledge and impressions of these (Martin Wackernagel 'Die ideale Landsitz eines christlichen Humanisten der Renaissancezeit' *Schweizer Rundschau* 51 [1951–2] 174–82).

In 1514–16, when Erasmus was in Basel intermittently, he lived at the house 'zum Sessel.' After several years' absence he returned in November 1521. For ten months he lived again at 'zum Sessel,' then in the autumn of 1522 moved to another house, 'zur alten Treu.' In 1529 he left Basel for Freiburg but returned in May 1535 and lived until his death in July 1536 at 'zum Luft.' All three properties were owned by the Froben family, the first two by Johann and the third by his son and successor Hieronymus. Both 'zum Sessel' and 'zur alten Treu,' which were in the same neighbourhood, had adjacent gardens which Erasmus enjoyed. The house 'zum Luft,' where he spent his last year as the guest of Hieronymus Froben, was near the minster. In modern times it has become the Braus-Riggenbach Antiquariat, booksellers. This handsome building, Erasmushaus as it is now called, preserves the memory of Erasmus' friendship and collaboration with his favourite publisher. On these three houses, their locations and history, see P. Roth 'Die Wohnstätten des Erasmus in Basel' in *Gedenkschrift* 270–81; a pamphlet on the Erasmushaus issued by Braus-Riggenbach Antiquariat; and Allen Epp 1289:33n, 1316:38n.

Colet's lodge at the Charterhouse of Sheen had 'painted images upon the walls' (as his will states; it is printed in Samuel Knight's *Life of John Colet* [London 1724] 466). So did Botzheim's, where on all sides were pictures and figures which drew and held one's attention. An abundance of pictures and images, both sacred and profane, with quotations or mottoes attached, gives Eusebius' villa an emblematic character enhancing the pleasure of the guests and the significance of such a house for thoughtful readers. In the first place, pictures provide exercise in 'artificial' memory, a standard mnemonic technique cultivated in antiquity and passed on through the centuries. Since sight is the keenest sense, Cicero tells us, we can most easily remember what we think or hear if it is represented by images or pictures (*De oratore* 2.87.357), and Quintilian uses a spacious house with many rooms as an example of how the pictorial method of memorizing works (11.2.17–21). See n314 below and the colloquy 'The Art of Learning.' Secondly, pictures, inscriptions, and the like reflect the interplay of nature and art, literal and metaphorical understanding, intimation and actuality. On this aspect of 'The Godly Feast' see Terence Cave 'Enargeia: Erasmus and the Rhetoric of Presence in the Sixteenth Century' *L'esprit créateur* 16 (Winter 1976) 5–19.

Erasmus' colloquies are unequal in artistry and appeal, but in the best of them he is a master of dialogue, expressing a variety of ideas and suggesting and resolving opinions through his characters. 'The Godly Feast' opens with a deceptive informality that puts the guests (and readers) at their ease. After a cordial welcome they are taken on a tour of house and gardens, then to luncheon, where they engage in a leisurely examination of serious, and some of them profound, subjects. After that they receive gifts, are shown other parts of the estate, and then take their leave. The dialogue has a coherence and unity that strengthen verisimilitude. Its subjects preclude much of the banter, jokes, and satire so common in many other Erasmian dialogues, but in spite of that it has always been one of the most admired of the colloquies. Besides its literary excellence as dialogue not undeserving of comparison with Platonic or (more closely) Ciceronian prototypes, its blending of classical and Christian themes produces a superb illustration of the spirit of the Christian humanism we associate with the name of Erasmus. Yet this blend or harmony is not a matching of components possessing equal value. Religion is the dominant, controlling concern, Christ the invisible but principal guest. The meeting of friends, like the meal itself – which 'represents in a way [the] . . . Last Supper' (182:30) – begins and ends with reminders of his presence (177:3–41, 207:22).

Thematically as well as structurally the exchange of judgments on passages in Proverbs 21, 1 Corinthians, and Matthew 6 and 9 (184:4–202:31 below) is the cardinal section of the dialogue. The general theme of this discussion

is the true nature of Christian liberty: inner, spiritual freedom as contrasted with convention and ecclesiastical or political constraints. Informal as the conversation is, it is a good example of Erasmus' notion of the right approach to interpretation of Scripture – right for such men as these and by implication for all men. The speakers proceed reverently and cautiously. By scrutinizing texts, comparing crucial words and phrases and relating these to contexts, they believe they achieve glimpses of truth or, at the least, consensus about probabilities. None of them claims full or final certitude, but all are hopeful that by earnest study in a devout spirit they may be vouchsafed a measure of understanding. They see through a glass darkly, for Scripture, like the villa itself, always has further riches, additional surprises, in store; so that the setting and the inquiry seem to correspond. See further nn47, 61, 158, and 182 below.

These friends are well educated, as is clear in the passage on the illustrious ancients (192:5–194:36), the finest thing of its kind in Renaissance literature, but they are not divines, not professional scholars. Erasmus himself emphasizes that they are all laymen and married ('The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1101:11–12, and see nn112 and 113 below). The centrality of Scripture in the Reformation and its attendant controversies, the role of the laity, and the wider distribution of vernacular Bibles are implied or foreseen in these pages, which come appropriately from the pen of one who devoted so much of his life to biblical studies, urged that translations be made for all, and hoped that even the humblest workers would lighten their labours with Scripture (*Paraclesis* LB VI *3 verso).

No one familiar with Erasmus' thought and with his other writings can doubt that the speakers – not Eusebius only but the others too – express authentic Erasmian judgments on the main topics discussed in this colloquy; an assertion easily demonstrable by reference to his treatises and commentaries. One has a sense also of the invisible presence of Colet. He was not a layman, nor is he named here as he is in 'The Whole Duty of Youth,' but we know how highly Erasmus praised his piety and moral earnestness. He may be regarded as a contributor to this occasion, if only by his custom of inviting discussion of biblical texts at table (Allen Ep 1211:307–27 / CWE Ep 1211:337–58). Erasmus' memoir of Colet was published just a year earlier than 'The Godly Feast,' which is in a sense another tribute to him.

On a Spanish version by Alonso Ruiz de Virués see Bataillon *Erasme et l'Espagne* 328–34. Relevant studies of 'The Godly Feast' from 1936 to 1985 are listed in the Erasmian bibliographies compiled by J.-C. Margolin. The most distinctive analysis is Terence Cave's in *The Cornucopian Text* (Oxford 1979). Others include the following: Wayne A. Rebhorn 'Erasmian Education and the *Convivium Religiosum*' *Studies in Philology* 69 (1972) 131–49; Geraldine

Thompson *Under Pretext of Praise* (Toronto 1973) 32–40; Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle *Erasmus on Language and Method in Theology* (Toronto 1977) 129–41; *Erasme: cinq banquets* ed J. Chomarat and D. Ménager et al (Paris 1981) introduction. After some reflections on Erasmus' attitude towards rites and sacraments, including the Eucharist, Chomarat suggests that this godly feast is without doubt the Erasmian mass (*Grammaire et rhétorique* 1705): a bold but provocative exaggeration.

EUSEBIUS, TIMOTHY, THEOPHILUS, CHRYSOGLOTTUS, URANIUS¹
[SOPHRONIUS, EULALIUS, NEPHALIUS, THEODIDACTUS,
SERVANT BOY]

Eusebius Now that the whole countryside is fresh and smiling,² I marvel at
5 people who take pleasure in smoky cities.³

Timothy Some people don't enjoy the sight of flowers or verdant meadows or fountains or streams; or if they do, something else pleases them more. Thus pleasure succeeds pleasure, as nail drives out nail.⁴

Eusebius Maybe you refer to moneylenders⁵ or to greedy merchants, who
10 are just like them.

Timothy Those, yes, but not those alone, my good friend. No, countless others besides them, even including priests and monks, who for the sake of gain usually prefer to live in cities⁶ – the most populous cities. They follow not Pythagorean or Platonic doctrine⁷ but that of a certain blind beggar who
15 rejoiced in the jostling of a crowd because, he would say, where there were people there was profit.

Eusebius Away with the blind and their profit! We're philosophers.

Timothy Even the philosopher Socrates preferred the city to the country, because he was eager to learn and cities afforded him means of learning. In
20 the countryside, to be sure, were trees and gardens, springs and streams, to please the eye; but they had nothing to say and therefore taught nothing.⁸

Eusebius Socrates was not altogether wrong if you mean roaming in the fields by yourself – although Nature, in my opinion, is not silent but speaks to us everywhere and teaches the observant man many things if she finds
25 him attentive and receptive. What else⁹ does the charming countenance of verdant nature proclaim than that God the creator's wisdom is equal to his goodness? – But how many things Socrates teaches his friend Phaedrus in that walk beyond the city, and how much does he learn from him in turn!

Timothy If people of that sort were present, nothing could be more
30 enjoyable than country life.

Eusebius Then do you care to try it? I've a little country place near town, modest but well cared for, to which I invite you for lunch tomorrow.

Timothy There are several of us. We'd eat you out of house and home.

Eusebius Oh, no, the whole meal will come from the vegetable garden, made as Horace says, 'from food not bought.'¹⁰ The place itself supplies the wine, melons large and small,¹¹ figs, pears, apples, and nuts: the very trees will all but drop them into your lap, as happens (if we believe Lucian) in the Fortunate Isles.¹² Perhaps a hen will arrive from the coop.

Timothy Well, we won't decline.

Eusebius But let each one bring along the shadow of his choice. Thus, since there are four of you, we'll equal the number of the Muses.¹³

Timothy We'll do it.

Eusebius One thing I want to warn you of: everybody should bring his own seasoning with him. I'll furnish the food.

Timothy What seasoning do you mean, pepper or sugar?

Eusebius No, something cheaper but nicer.

Timothy What?

Eusebius An appetite.¹⁴ A light supper today will supply that. Tomorrow a walk will sharpen it – and my little country place will furnish the walk, too.

Timothy What hour do you like for lunch?¹⁵

Timothy About ten, before the heat's too great.

Eusebius I'll arrange it.¹⁶

Boy¹⁷ Master, the guests are at the gate.

Eusebius You're as good as your word about coming, but it's doubly gratifying that you've come early, along with your shadows, who are most welcome. Some guests, ill-bred, torment a host by being late.

Timothy We came a little early in order to have time to walk around and see this palace of yours, which we hear is filled with various delights – not a corner that doesn't bear the master's stamp.

Eusebius You'll see a palace worthy of such a king. To me, certainly, it is a little nest¹⁸ dearer than any palace. And if he may be said to reign who lives exactly as he pleases, clearly I reign here. But it's best, I think, while the countess of the kitchen¹⁹ prepares a vegetable dish, and the heat of the sun is still moderate, to visit my gardens.

Timothy There's another besides this? For this admirably tended one immediately greets those who enter with the most delightful spectacle and receives them cordially.

Eusebius Then let everyone pick some blossoms and leaves from it, so the smell of the house won't give offence. The same scent doesn't please everyone; therefore let each one of you choose for himself. Don't be sparing,

for I allow whatever grows here to be almost public property. The door of this forecourt is never shut except at night.

Timothy Look, here's Peter on the door.²⁰

Eusebius I prefer him as porter to the Mercuries, Centaurs, and other
5 monsters some people paint on their doors.

Timothy This is more appropriate to a Christian.

Eusebius My doorkeeper's no silent one, either. He greets the caller in three
languages.²¹

Timothy What does he say?

10 **Eusebius** Why not read it for yourself?

Timothy It's a little too far away for me to make out plainly.

Eusebius Here's an eyeglass that will make you a Lynceus.²²

Timothy I see the Latin: 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments.'
Matthew, chapter 19.²³

15 **Eusebius** Now read the Greek.

Timothy I see the Greek all right, but it's Greek to me,²⁴ so I'll hand the
torch²⁵ to Theophilus, who's always spouting Greek.

Theophilus 'Repent ye, therefore, and be converted.' Acts, chapter 3.²⁶

Chrysoglossus I'll take the Hebrew: 'The just shall live by his faith.'²⁷

20 **Eusebius**²⁸ Does he seem to you an uncivil porter who at our entry warns
us to avoid sin and turn to the pursuit of godliness; next, warns that we
do not attain to the true Christian life by works of the Mosaic law but
through gospel faith; finally, that the way to life eternal is by obeying the
commandments of the gospel?

25 **Timothy** And look: next, to the right of the entrance, he is indicating an
exquisite little shrine. On the altar is Jesus Christ, looking up to heaven,²⁹
whence his Father and the Holy Spirit look out, and he points to heaven
with his right hand while with his left he seems to beckon and invite the
passer-by.

30 **Eusebius** Nor does he receive us in silence: you see in Latin 'I am the
way, the truth, and the life';³⁰ in Greek 'I am Alpha and Omega';³¹ in
Hebrew 'Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the
Lord.'³²

Timothy Truly the Lord Jesus has greeted us with glad tidings.

35 **Eusebius** But lest we seem rude we should perhaps return his greeting.
Let us pray³³ that since we can avail nothing of ourselves, he in his infinite
goodness may never permit us to stray from the path of salvation, but, after
we have rejected Jewish forms and the deceits of this world, may guide us
through gospel truth to life eternal – that is, draw us to himself by himself.

40 **Timothy** A quite reasonable proposal; and the very appearance of the place
invites one to pray.

Eusebius The charm of this garden entices many guests, but so strong is the force of custom that hardly any of them passes Jesus without greeting him. I've placed him here, instead of the filthy Priapus,³⁴ as protector not only of my garden but of everything I own; in short, of body and soul alike.

5 Here, as you see, is a little fountain bubbling merrily with excellent water. It symbolizes in a manner that unique fountain which refreshes with its heavenly stream all those who labour and are heavy laden,³⁵ and for which the soul, wearied by the evils of this world, pants as, according to the psalmist,³⁶ does the thirsty hart after tasting the flesh of serpents.³⁷ Whoever thirsts is
10 welcome to drink of it. And some for religion's sake sprinkle themselves with the water. Some even drink, not because of thirst, but of religion.

I see you don't like to be torn away from this spot, but meantime the hour warns us to visit the more cultivated garden that the walls of my domain enclose in a square. *If there's anything to be seen in the house, you'll*
15 *view it after lunch, when the sun's heat will keep us indoors like snails for some hours.*

Timothy Oh! These must be Epicurean gardens I see.³⁸

Eusebius This entire place is intended for pleasure – honest pleasure, that is: to feast the eyes, refresh the nostrils, restore the soul. Here nothing grows
20 but fragrant herbs, and those not just any herbs but only choice ones. Each kind has its own beds.

Timothy Your herbs here aren't speechless, either, so far as I can see.

Eusebius Quite right. Other men have luxurious homes; I have one where there's plenty of talk, in order that I may never seem lonely. You'll say so
25 even more emphatically when you've seen the whole of it. As the herbs are gathered into companies,³⁹ so to speak, so each company has its banner, with an inscription. For instance, the marjoram here says 'Keep off, pig; I am not fragrant for you,' because swine positively hate this odour, though it is the sweetest of scents.⁴⁰ Each kind likewise has its own label indicating the
30 special virtue of that herb.

Timothy Thus far I've seen nothing more delightful than this little fountain. Here in their midst it seems to smile on all the plants and promises to keep them cool in the heat. But this narrow channel, which shows all the water so gracefully to men's eyes, dividing the garden on either side into equal parts
35 and reflecting the plants as though in a mirror – is it made of marble?

Eusebius Don't say that. Where would marble come from? It's imitation marble made of cement. The colour is added later by means of a white coating.

Timothy Where does such a pretty stream finally bury itself?

40 **Eusebius** See how crude we are: after it has delighted our eyes here sufficiently, it drains the kitchen and carries that waste along to the sewer.

Timothy That's callous, so help me!

Eusebius Callous, unless the goodness of the eternal Will⁴¹ had made it for this use. We're callous too when we pollute with our sins and wicked lusts the fountain of Sacred Scripture – a far more pleasing fountain than this, given to refresh as well as cleanse our souls – and misuse so ineffable a gift of God. We do not misuse this water if we employ it for the various purposes for which it was given by him who provides everything abundantly for human needs.

Timothy What you say is altogether true. But why have you had⁴² even the edgings of your garden made green?

Eusebius To avoid having anything here that isn't green. Some people prefer red because the addition of that colour enhances green. I prefer this. Every man to his taste,⁴³ even in gardens.

Timothy The garden by itself is charming, but its beauty is almost overshadowed by the three loggias.⁴⁴

Eusebius In these I study or stroll, conversing with myself or some close friend. Or, if the fancy strikes me, I have a meal here.

Timothy Those evenly spaced pillars that support the building, so fascinating by their marvellous variety of colours – are *they* marble?

Eusebius The same marble this channel is made of.

Timothy An artistic deception indeed. I'd have sworn they were marble.

Eusebius Let that be a warning to you not to believe or swear to anything rashly: appearances often deceive.⁴⁵ We make up for lack of wealth by ingenuity.

Timothy Wasn't so neat and trim a garden good enough for you unless you painted other ones besides?⁴⁶

Eusebius One garden wasn't enough to hold all kinds of plants. Moreover, we are twice pleased when we see a painted flower competing with a real one.⁴⁷ In one we admire the cleverness of nature, in the other the inventiveness of the painter, in each the goodness of God,⁴⁸ who gives all these things for our use and is equally wonderful and kind in everything. Finally, a garden isn't always green, nor are flowers always blooming. *This* garden grows and pleases even in midwinter.

Timothy Yet it isn't fragrant.

Eusebius But on the other hand it needs no attention.

Timothy It pleases only the eyes.

Eusebius True, but it does this forever.

Timothy A picture, too, grows old.

Eusebius Yes, but it's longer-lived than we are, and age commonly adds to it a grace we lose.

Timothy I wish you were wrong about that!

- Eusebius** In this loggia on the west side, I enjoy the morning sun; in that one on the east, I sun myself sometimes; in the one on the south but opening to the north, I take refuge from the heat of the sun. Let's walk around, if you like, to get a better view. See, the very ground is green, for the paving stones are beautifully coloured and gladden one with painted flowers. This painted grove you observe, covering the entire wall, presents a varied spectacle. In the first place, you see as many varieties of trees as you do trees, each one represented with no little accuracy. You see as many species of birds as you do birds, especially those fairly rare and renowned for one reason or another. (What use to paint geese, hens, and ducks?) Underneath are species of quadrupeds or of those birds that live on the ground like quadrupeds.
- Timothy** A wonderful variety; nothing inactive, nothing that's not doing or saying something.⁴⁹ What does the owl that's almost hidden under the branches tell us?
- Eusebius** An Attic owl,⁵⁰ it speaks the Attic tongue: 'Be prudent,' it says, 'I don't fly for everyone.'⁵¹ It bids us act advisedly, because unadvised rashness brings misfortune to some. Here an eagle rends a hare, a beetle protesting in vain.⁵² Beside the beetle stands a wren, the deadly enemy of the eagle.⁵³
- Timothy**⁵⁴ What does the swallow carry in its mouth?
- Eusebius** Swallowwort, for by this she restores the sight of her blind fledglings.⁵⁵ – Do you recognize the shape of the plant?
- Timothy** What new kind of lizard is this?
- Eusebius** It's not a lizard but a chameleon.⁵⁶
- Timothy** This is the chameleon, famous for its long name? I thought it was a bigger beast than a lion, whom it surpasses even in name.
- Eusebius** This chameleon here is always open-mouthed, always hungry.⁵⁷ Here's a wild fig tree.⁵⁸ Only when near it is he fierce: at other times he's harmless. But he does have poison; don't scorn a gaping creature so small.
- Timothy** But he doesn't change colour.⁵⁹
- Eusebius** True, because he doesn't change place; when he changes place you'll see a different colour.
- Timothy** What's the piper doing here?
- Eusebius** Don't you see the camel dancing⁶⁰ nearby?
- Timothy** I see a strange sight: a wanton camel and a monkey as flute player.
- Eusebius** But there'll be opportunity to examine these sights one by one at your leisure some other time, or for three days together. Enough now to have seen them as if through a lattice.⁶¹ Over here is every kind of remarkable plant accurately painted, which you may justly admire. Here are poisonous plants, but however poisonous, they may not only be viewed safely but even touched.

Timothy Here's a scorpion, a rare pest in these parts but common in Italy.⁶² Though to me his colour in the picture doesn't seem convincing.

Eusebius How so?

Timothy Because the Italian ones are darker: this one's rather light.

5 **Eusebius** But don't you recognize the plant on whose leaf he's fallen?

Timothy Not well enough.

Eusebius No wonder, for it doesn't grow in our gardens. It's wolfsbane, so poisonous that when a scorpion comes in contact with it he's stunned, turns pale, and surrenders. But, injured by a poison, he seeks a remedy in
10 poison. You see nearby both varieties of hellebore.⁶³ If the scorpion can get free of the wolfsbane leaf and touch the white hellebore, he'll recover his old strength; the touch of a different poison cures his numbness.⁶⁴

Timothy Then this scorpion's done for, because he'll never free himself from the wolfsbane leaf. – Do even scorpions talk here?

15 **Eusebius** Yes, and in Greek, too.

Timothy What does he say?

Eusebius 'God hath found out the guilty.'⁶⁵ Here beside the plants you see every kind of serpent. Look: a basilisk, dreadful with his fiery eyes and extremely dangerous poisons.⁶⁶

20 **Timothy** He, too, is saying something.

Eusebius 'Let them hate so long as they fear.'

Timothy A royal saying, clearly.

Eusebius No, nothing is less royal;⁶⁷ the saying of a tyrant, rather.⁶⁸ Here a lizard fights with an adder.⁶⁹ Here a dipsas lurks,⁷⁰ hidden by the shell of an
25 ostrich egg. Here you see a whole republic⁷¹ of ants, whom the Hebrew sage urges us to imitate;⁷² and so does our Horace, too.⁷³ Here you see Indian ants, which carry gold and hoard it.⁷⁴

Timothy Good heavens, who could possibly become bored in this changing scene?

30 **Eusebius** At some other time, I say, you may look at it until you're tired. For the present, just observe the third wall from a distance. It has lakes, rivers, and seas containing every kind of well-known fish. Here's the Nile, in which you see the dolphin, who loves men, fighting with a crocodile, than which man has no deadlier enemy.⁷⁵ On the banks you see amphibians,⁷⁶
35 such as crabs, seals, a beaver. Here's a polyp,⁷⁷ a trapper⁷⁸ trapped by a shellfish.

Timothy⁷⁹ What's the inscription? 'A trapper, I am trapped.'⁸⁰ The painter has made the water wonderfully clear.

Eusebius He had to, or we should have needed other eyes. Next is another
40 polyp, a nautilus,⁸¹ sailing merrily along the surface like a yacht.⁸² You see a torpedo⁸³ lying on sand of the same colour; here you can touch it safely with

your hand. But we must hurry on to another place. These sights feast the eyes but don't fill the belly. Let's get on to the rest.

Timothy Still more?

Eusebius Next you'll see what the back door⁸⁴ has to show us. Here you
5 see an ample garden, divided into two parts. In one are all kinds of edible
plants; my wife⁸⁵ and maidservant rule here. In the other are all sorts
of medicinal plants, especially the notable ones. To the left is an open
meadow with nothing but green grass, enclosed⁸⁶ all round by a fence
woven from thorn branches. There I stroll sometimes or entertain myself
10 with company. To the right is an orchard in which, at your leisure, you'll see
many exotic trees that I'm gradually training to accustom themselves to our
climate.

Timothy Well! You outdo Alcinous himself.⁸⁷

Eusebius Here on the outside wall, joining the upper gallery which you'll
15 see after lunch, is an aviary. You'll see different shapes and hear different
tongues. Equally diverse are the birds' natures:⁸⁸ among some, kinship
and mutual affection; among others, irreconcilable enmity. Yet they're all
so tame that when the window there is opened at dinner, they fly down
to the table and take food from your hands. Whenever I approach on the
20 little footbridge⁸⁹ you see, talking with a friend, they sit nearby and listen,
perching on my arms or shoulders, so fearless are they, because they know
nobody harms them. At the far end of the orchard is the kingdom of the
bees; no unattractive sight, either.⁹⁰ I won't let you look any more just now; I
want you to have something to bring you back, as though to a new spectacle.
25 After lunch I'll show you the rest.⁹¹

Boy Your wife and the maid complain that lunch is getting spoiled.⁹²

Eusebius Tell them to be calm, we're coming presently. Let's wash,
gentlemen, that we may approach the table with hands and hearts both clean.
For truly if a meal was something holy to pagans,⁹³ much more should it
30 be sacred to Christians, for whom it represents in a way that hallowed Last
Supper which the Lord Jesus took with his disciples.⁹⁴ Hence the custom
of washing the hands,⁹⁵ in order that if perchance any hatred, envy, or
shamefulness dwell in one's mind one may get rid of it before coming to eat.
And indeed I believe food is better for the body if eaten with a pure mind.

35 **Timothy** We heartily agree.

Eusebius Since Christ himself set the example of sanctifying the food by
a hymn⁹⁶ – for I believe we often read in the gospel that he blessed food
or gave thanks to the Father before breaking bread⁹⁷ – and again of ending
with a hymn, I'll recite, if you like, a hymn that St Chrysostom praises very
40 highly in one of his homilies and even thought worthy of explication.

Timothy We beg you to do so.

Eusebius 'Blessed be thou, O God, who hast nourished me from my youth up, who providest food for every creature. Fill our hearts with joy and gladness, that having abundance we may abound to every good work. In the name of Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Spirit be glory, honour, and dominion forever.'⁹⁸

Timothy Amen.

Eusebius Now take your places at table, every one with his shadow.⁹⁹

Timothy, your gray hairs entitle you to be at the head of the table.

Timothy You've expressed my whole merit in a word. On this score alone am I to be preferred before the others.

Eusebius God is the judge of other gifts; we go by what we see.

Sophronius,¹⁰⁰ stay where you are. Theophilus and Eulalius, sit at the right of the table. Chrysoglottus and Theodidactus will take the left, Uranius and Nephalius the other places. I'll guard this corner.¹⁰¹

Timothy¹⁰² We won't allow that. The host should be at the head of the table.

Eusebius This whole house is mine and yours too, but if I may have authority in my own realm I decree that the host is to have whichever place he chooses. Now may Christ, who makes all men to rejoice, and without whom nothing is truly pleasing, deign to attend our feast and rejoice our hearts by his presence.¹⁰³

Timothy I hope he will deign to do so. But since every place is filled, where will he sit?

Eusebius May he mingle with all our food and drink, so that everything may taste of him, but most of all may he penetrate our hearts! That he may be pleased to do so, and that we make ourselves the readier for so great a guest, you shall hear (if you don't object) a short passage from Sacred Scripture, but in such fashion that you will continue none the less to partake of eggs and lettuce¹⁰⁴ if you like.

Timothy We'll eat with pleasure but listen with even more pleasure.

Eusebius This custom,¹⁰⁵ it seems to me, has much to recommend it, because by means of it we avoid foolish yarns and enjoy profitable conversation. I disagree emphatically with those who think a dinner party isn't enjoyable unless it overflows with silly, bawdy stories and rings with dirty songs.¹⁰⁶ True gaiety comes from a clean, sincere conscience. And truly enjoyable conversations are those that are always pleasant to have held or heard and always delightful to recall, not those that soon cause one to be ashamed and conscience-stricken.

Timothy Would that we all weighed the words of Scripture as much as their truth deserves!

Eusebius Besides their assured and extraordinary usefulness, they become pleasing too when you've been accustomed to them for a month.¹⁰⁷

Timothy Nothing is more advisable, therefore, than to habituate ourselves to what is excellent.

Eusebius Read clearly and distinctly, boy.

Boy 'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will. Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts. To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.'¹⁰⁸

Eusebius That will do. For it's more beneficial to learn a few things eagerly than to swallow many in boredom.

Timothy Very true, but not of this book only. Pliny wrote that Cicero's *De officiis* should never be out of one's hands,¹⁰⁹ and in my opinion it certainly deserves the closest study by everybody, especially by those destined for public service.¹¹⁰ But this little book of Proverbs I've always considered worthy of being carried with us at all times.

Eusebius I've provided it as seasoning, since I knew the lunch would be thin and insipid.

Timothy Really, it's all very elegant; and yet if we had nothing but beets without pepper, wine, and vinegar,¹¹¹ such a reading would season everything.

Eusebius Nevertheless I should be better pleased if I understood thoroughly what I heard. I wish we had a good theologian here who not only understood these matters but had prudence as well. I don't know whether it's permissible for us simple laymen¹¹² to discuss these topics.¹¹³

Timothy It would be permissible even for sailors, in my opinion, provided there is no rash attempt at formal definition. And perhaps Christ, who promised to be present wherever two men are gathered together in his name,¹¹⁴ will help us, since we are so many.

Eusebius Then suppose we divide the three verses among the nine of us?¹¹⁵

Guests Good. Only let the host begin.

Eusebius I wouldn't refuse my assignment, but I'm afraid the fare I shall provide may be even worse than the food I serve you. All right; I don't want to be a disagreeable host. Putting aside the various conjectures of commentators on the passage,¹¹⁶ I think its moral sense is this.¹¹⁷ Other mortals can be swayed by warnings, scoldings, laws, and threats; the king's heart, if you oppose it, is annoyed rather, since it fears nobody.¹¹⁸ And therefore, whenever princes have their minds set on anything they should be left to their whims, not because they always desire what is best but because God sometimes uses their madness or wickedness to correct sinners, as he forbade resistance to Nebuchadnezzar because he had decided to chastise his people through the agency of this king.¹¹⁹ Perhaps that is what Job means: 'Who maketh the hypocrite reign for the sins of the people.'¹²⁰ And maybe

what David says, lamenting his sin, applies here: 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.'¹²¹ Not that kings don't commit sin, to the great injury of their people, but none of their subjects has authority to condemn them; whereas no man, be he ever so mighty, can escape God's judgment.

Timothy Your interpretation does not displease me. But what does 'the rivers of water' mean?

Eusebius There's a comparison at hand to explain it. A king's mind, when aroused, is violent and unrestrained; it cannot be led this way or that but is driven by its own force, as if excited by a divine frenzy,¹²² just as the sea spreads itself over the land and frequently changes course, heedless of fields, buildings, and whatever else stands in its way; in some places it goes underground. If you tried to stop its force or divert it, you could do nothing. The same with large rivers: witness stories about Achelous.¹²³ But you suffer less harm if you go along with the stream than if you resist violently.

Timothy Then is there no remedy against the unbridled fury of wicked kings?

Eusebius The first, perhaps, will be not to receive the lion into the city.¹²⁴ Next, by authority of senate, magistrates, and people, to limit his power in such a way that he may not easily break out into tyranny. But the best safeguard of all is to shape his character by sacred teachings while he's still a boy and doesn't realize he's a ruler. Petitions and admonitions help, provided they are polite and temperate. Your last resort¹²⁵ is to implore God without ceasing to incline the king's heart to conduct worthy of a Christian prince.

Timothy What do you mean, 'layman'? Were I a bachelor of divinity I'd be very little ashamed of this interpretation.

Eusebius Whether it's correct I don't know; I'm satisfied that the idea isn't irreverent or heretical. – I've carried out your request. Now, as is proper at parties, it's my turn to hear you.

Timothy I think – if you make allowance for these grey hairs – that this saying can be accommodated to a deeper meaning.

Eusebius So do I, and I want to hear it.

Timothy 'King' can be understood as the perfect man who, with his bodily passions under control, is governed solely by the power of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, to compel such a man to conform to human laws is perhaps inappropriate. Instead he should be left to his Master, by whose spirit he is led; he is not to be judged by those circumstances through which the weakness of feeble men is drawn, in one way or another, to true godliness. But if he does anything unrighteously, we ought to say with Paul: 'God hath received him; to his own master he standeth or falleth.' Likewise: 'He

that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.¹²⁶ Therefore nobody may prescribe to such men, but the Lord who set the bounds to sea and rivers has the heart of the king in his hand and directs it whithersoever he wills.¹²⁷ What need¹²⁸ is there to prescribe to him who voluntarily does more than human laws require? Or what foolhardiness would it be to bind by human regulations the man who (as is evident by certain signs) is governed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?

5 **Eusebius** Truly, Timothy,¹²⁹ you're venerable not in years alone but in pure learning as well. And would that among Christians, all of whom should be
10 kings of this kind, many more might be found worthy of the name!

But we've had enough of eggs and greens to start with. Have these removed and the other things served.

Timothy I'm well satisfied with this 'ovation' even if there's nothing else, either festival or triumph, to follow.¹³⁰

15 **Eusebius** Yes, but since, by Christ's help as I believe, explication of the first verse has been successful, I'd like your shadow to interpret the second one, which seems to me somewhat more obscure.

Sophronius If you'll take in good part whatever I say, I'll try my best to tell you how the matter looks to me. How else could a shadow¹³¹ shed light on
20 darkness?

Eusebius Well, on behalf of the company I accept the condition; and such shadows have their own light, one more suitable to our eyes.

Sophronius The doctrine here seems the same as that of Paul, that piety is sought after by various modes of life. Some find the priesthood to their
25 liking, some celibacy, some marriage, some withdrawal from the world, some public affairs, according to their different constitutions and temperaments. Again, one man eats anything he likes; another discriminates between foods; another, between days; to another every day is the same. In these matters Paul wants everyone to enjoy his own preferences without reproach from
30 anybody else.¹³² No man should judge in questions of this sort but leave judgment to God, who pondereth the hearts. And in fact it often happens that he who eats is more acceptable to God than he who does not; and he who profanes a holy day than he who seems to keep it; and this man's marriage is more acceptable in the sight of God than the celibacy of many others. I the
35 shadow have had my say.

Eusebius I hope it may often fall to my lot to talk with such shadows! Unless I'm mistaken, you've touched the spot, not with the needle (as the saying goes)¹³³ but with the tongue. – But here's one who's lived celibate yet is not of the company of the blessed who 'have made themselves eunuchs for the
40 kingdom of heaven's sake.'¹³⁴ This creature was forcibly castrated to please the belly more, until 'God shall destroy both it and meats.'¹³⁵ It's a capon

from my own coop. I'm fond of boiled dishes. The broth which floats on it is not bad, and the lettuce is excellent. Everybody help himself as he likes. But I don't wish to deceive you: we'll have a roast after this, then dessert,¹³⁶ and finally the end of the story.¹³⁷

5 **Timothy** But meantime we exclude your wife from the feast.

Eusebius When you bring yours along, mine will sit with us too. What would she be now but a mute?¹³⁸ As a woman, she prefers to gossip with women;¹³⁹ and we philosophize more freely. Otherwise we might run the risk of meeting with the same accident as that which befell Socrates. When
10 he was entertaining philosophers – who would rather chat like this than eat – and the argument went on and on, Xanthippe in a fit of anger upset the table.¹⁴⁰

Timothy I'm sure there's nothing we need fear less from your wife, since she's a woman of very placid temper.

15 **Eusebius** So much so to me, at least, that I wouldn't exchange her if I could; and in this respect I account myself fortunate indeed. For I don't agree with those who think a man lucky not to have had a wife.¹⁴¹ I like rather the Hebrew sage's saying that he that hath a good wife hath a good lot.¹⁴²

Timothy Often it's our own fault that our wives are bad, either because we
20 choose bad ones or make them such, or don't train and control them as we should.¹⁴³

Eusebius Right. But meanwhile I'm waiting for an interpretation of the third sentence, and the inspired¹⁴⁴ Theophilus, I think, is now ready to speak.

Theophilus No, my mind was on my dishes. Nevertheless I'll speak, since I
25 may do so safely.

Eusebius You'll please us even by making a mistake, for thus you'll give us opportunity of finding the answer.

Theophilus The idea seems to me the same as that which the Lord revealed through the prophet Hosea, chapter 6: 'I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings'¹⁴⁵ – a passage whose living and effectual interpreter is the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 9.¹⁴⁶ When he was to dine in the house of Levi the publican, who had invited many of his own class and occupation to the feast, the Pharisees – proud of being strict keepers of the Law, though they disregarded those
30 commandments on which all the Law and the prophets hung¹⁴⁷ – in order to turn the minds of his disciples away from Jesus, asked them why their master would eat with sinners, from whose company Jews abstained if they wanted to be considered especially holy. (If they chanced to meet such a person, they washed themselves as soon as they returned home.)¹⁴⁸ And
40 since the disciples, still inexperienced, were at a loss to reply, the Lord answered for them as well as for himself: 'They that be whole,' he said,

'need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'¹⁴⁹

5 **Eusebius** You explain the matter admirably by comparing passages, an excellent method of biblical study.¹⁵⁰ But I should like to learn what 'sacrifice' and 'mercy' mean. How can God's rejection of sacrifices agree with his having commanded so often that they be made to him?

Theophilus God himself teaches us in Isaiah, chapter 1 in what manner he rejects sacrifices.¹⁵¹ Jewish law enjoins some things that are the appearance
10 rather than the substance of holiness: such things as holy days, sabbaths, fasts, sacrifices. And there are some things always to be observed, things good not because they are commanded but good *per se*.¹⁵² But God rejects the Jews, not because they observed the rites of the Law but because, foolishly puffed up by keeping them, they neglected what God especially requires
15 of us. Saturated with greed, pride, theft, hatred, envy, and other sins, they thought God much in their debt because they frequented the temple on holy days, offered burnt sacrifices, abstained from forbidden foods, and fasted occasionally. They embraced the shadows and neglected the substance.¹⁵³ As for 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' I suppose this is Hebrew idiom
20 for 'I desire mercy *more than* sacrifice,' as Solomon means when he says, 'To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.' Moreover, every act of kindness done to help our neighbour the Scripture calls mercy and pity (the word 'pity' is derived from 'having mercy').¹⁵⁴ I think 'sacrifice' means whatever pertains to corporeal rites and has some
25 connection with Judaism, such as choice of foods, prescribed dress, fasting, offering, perfunctory prayers, rest on holy days.¹⁵⁵ Though not to be omitted entirely at the proper occasion, these become displeasing to God if a person relies on such observances but neglects works of mercy when a brother's need calls for charity. To shun even the conversation¹⁵⁶ of the wicked gives an
30 appearance of holiness, but this should end whenever charity to a neighbour requires otherwise. To rest on holy days is obedience, but to let a brother perish on account of your religious observance of a day would be wicked. Likewise I should say keeping the sabbath is a sacrifice, to be reconciled with
35 your brother an act of mercy. Furthermore, though 'judgment' can refer to rulers, who often oppress the weak by force, nevertheless I think it quite possibly agrees with what is said in Hosea: 'and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.' One does not keep the Law unless one keeps it in accordance with God's purpose. The Jews rescued an ass if it fell into a ditch on the sabbath, yet reviled Christ for healing a man on the sabbath. This was
40 a preposterous judgment and far from an understanding of God, for they did not realize that these laws were made for man, not man for them.¹⁵⁷

But I might seem to say these things immodestly unless I said them by your command. I'd rather learn something more accurate from the others.¹⁵⁸

Eusebius So 'immodestly' was that said that for my part I could believe the Lord Jesus spoke through your mouth. – But while we feast our minds plenteously, let us not neglect their partners.

Theophilus Who are they?

Eusebius Our bodies; aren't they partners of our minds? For I prefer 'partners' to 'instruments' or 'dwellings' or 'tombs'.¹⁵⁹

Timothy When the whole man is refreshed, this is abundant refreshment indeed.

Eusebius I see you're slow to help yourselves, so with your permission I'll have the roast served, for fear I should give you a long feast instead of a luscious one. You behold the main course of our little luncheon: a small but excellent shoulder of mutton, a capon, and four partridges. Only the partridges were bought at market; my little estate here supplies the rest.

Timothy I behold an Epicurean, nay a Sybaritic,¹⁶⁰ luncheon.

Eusebius Oh, no, scarcely Carmelitic.¹⁶¹ But take it in good part, such as it is. My intentions are good even if the feast isn't sumptuous.

Timothy So far from silent is your house that not only the walls but the cup too says something.

Eusebius What does it tell you?

Timothy 'No one is harmed but by himself.'¹⁶²

Eusebius The cup speaks in defence of wine, for most people blame the wine when they get a fever or headache from drinking, though they themselves have invited the trouble by drinking too much.

Sophronius Mine speaks Greek: 'In wine there's truth.'¹⁶³

Eusebius A warning that it's not safe for priests or servants of kings to be fond of wine,¹⁶⁴ because wine commonly brings to the tip of man's tongue whatever he was hiding in his heart.

Sophronius Among the Egyptians priests were forbidden to drink wine,¹⁶⁵ even though men were not yet in the habit of committing secrets to them.

Eusebius Everyone's allowed to drink wine nowadays. Whether or not this is wise, I don't know. Eulalius, what's that little book you take from your bag? It looks very fine, for it's all gilded on the outside.

Eulalius But it's more than precious on the inside. These are Paul's letters, which I always carry with me as my favourite delights.¹⁶⁶ I take them out now because your remark reminded me of a certain passage that has puzzled me a good long while, and I haven't made up my mind about it even yet. It's in 1 Corinthians 6: 'All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.'¹⁶⁷ In the first place, if we believe the Stoics, nothing is

useful unless it is likewise honourable.¹⁶⁸ How then does Paul distinguish the lawful from the expedient? Surely whoring or drunkenness is not lawful; therefore how are 'all things' lawful? But if Paul is talking about a particular class of things, all of which he would allow, I can't well conjecture from the
5 tone of this passage what that class might be. What immediately follows suggests he is talking about the choice of foods, for some people abstained from meat offered to idols, some from foods forbidden by Moses. And he treats of meats offered to idols in chapter 8 and again in chapter 10.¹⁶⁹ As though to explain the meaning of this passage he says: 'All things are lawful
10 for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man the good of another. Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat.'¹⁷⁰ What Paul subjoins here seems to agree with what he had said above: 'Meats for the belly and the belly for meats: But God shall destroy both it and them.'¹⁷¹ That here too
15 he had in mind the Jewish choice of foods is indicated by the close of chapter 10: 'Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.'¹⁷² 'Gentiles' seems to be connected with meat offered to idols, 'Jews' with the choice of foods, 'the
20 church of God' with the weak of both races. It was permissible, therefore, to eat anything one liked, and 'unto the pure all things are pure.'¹⁷³ Yet this may be inexpedient. That all things were permissible was a matter of gospel liberty; but charity everywhere regards what contributes to the salvation of our neighbour and on that account frequently abstains from
25 what is permitted, preferring to yield to the welfare of a neighbour rather than exercise its liberty.¹⁷⁴

But here a double difficulty bothers me. First, in the context of the discourse nothing precedes or follows that fits this sense. In fact he rebukes the Corinthians for being unruly and impure by reason of whoring, adultery,
30 and even incest, and for going to law 'before the unjust.'¹⁷⁵ How does 'All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient' agree with these words? And in what follows he returns to the cause of their shamelessness (he had resumed this earlier also), dropping the subject of lawsuits. 'The body,' he says, 'is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the
35 body.'¹⁷⁶

Yet this difficulty I can manage to overcome, because a little earlier in his list of sins he had mentioned idolatry: 'Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers . . .'¹⁷⁷ Moreover, the eating of meats offered to idols bordered on idolatry. And therefore he adds immediately:
40 'Meats for the belly and the belly for meats,' signifying that for the body's needs one may, for the time being, eat anything one likes unless deterred by

compassion for a neighbour. But shamelessness is to be abhorred always and everywhere. Eating is necessary, but the necessity will be taken away at the resurrection of the dead; lusting is wickedness.

But a second puzzle I can't solve: how 'But I will not be brought under the power of any' agrees with this passage.¹⁷⁸ For he says he has all things in his power, yet will not be brought under the power of any. If one who abstains lest he give offence is said to be in the power of another, that's just what he says of himself in chapter 9: 'Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain all.'¹⁷⁹ St Ambrose, evidently troubled by this difficulty, thinks the Apostle's essential meaning is that he is preparing the way for saying in chapter 9 that he too has the power of doing what others, either apostles or false apostles, were doing – getting his livelihood from those to whom he preached the gospel. But in spite of a right to do this, he held back, to make matters easier for the Corinthians, whom he was rebuking for so many and such egregious sins. Furthermore, whoever accepts anything comes more or less under obligation to the one from whom he accepts it and loses some of his authority, since he is less free to criticize; and usually the giver won't tolerate criticism by the beneficiary.¹⁸⁰ In this respect, therefore, Paul refrained from what was permissible, to preserve his apostolic freedom; he wanted to avoid giving offence on this ground in order that he might denounce their sins more freely and with greater authority.

To me Ambrose's notion is not unattractive. If one prefers, nevertheless, to apply this passage to foods, my view is that Paul's 'But I will not be brought under the power of any' can be understood thus: 'Though for the sake of my neighbour's salvation and the advancement of the gospel I abstain sometimes from foods used in sacrifices, or forbidden by the Mosaic law, yet my mind is free, knowing I may eat whatever I please to satisfy my mere bodily needs.' But false apostles argued that some foods were unclean in themselves, not to be shunned only on occasion but always, as though they were naturally harmful, just as we refrain from murder and adultery. Those who believed this were 'brought under the power' of another and cut off from the freedom of the gospel.

Only Theophylact,¹⁸¹ as I recall, dissents from all these interpretations: 'It is permissible to eat any foods whatever, but not intemperately, for excess produces shamelessness.' Though not irreverent, this interpretation does not seem to me the genuine meaning¹⁸² of the text.

I've shown you what perplexes me. It will be left to your kindness to get me out of my difficulties.

Eusebius Indeed you answer to your name very well.¹⁸³ One who can put questions thus doesn't need someone else to answer them. You've expressed

your doubt in such a way that I myself am in doubt no longer, even though Paul, since he decided to deal with many matters at the same time, often shifts in this letter from one subject to another and then resumes what he had interrupted.

- 5 **Chrysoglottus** If I weren't afraid my chatter would interfere with your eating, and if I thought it lawful to introduce anything from profane writers into such religious conversation, I'd present something that didn't puzzle¹⁸⁴ but delighted me extremely as I was reading it today.

- Eusebius** On the contrary, whatever is devout and contributes to good
10 morals should not be called profane.¹⁸⁵ Sacred Scripture is of course the basic authority in everything;¹⁸⁶ yet I sometimes run across ancient sayings or pagan writings – even the poets' – so purely and reverently and admirably expressed that I can't help believing their authors' hearts were moved by some divine power.¹⁸⁷ And perhaps the spirit of Christ is more widespread
15 than we understand, and the company of saints includes many not in our calendar.¹⁸⁸ Speaking frankly among friends, I can't read Cicero's *De senectute*, *De amicitia*, *De officiis*, *De Tusculanis quaestionibus* without sometimes kissing the book and blessing that pure heart, divinely inspired as it was. But when, on the other hand, I read these modern¹⁸⁹ writers on government,
20 economics, or ethics – good Lord, how dull they are by comparison! And what lack of feeling they seem to have for what they write! So that I would much rather let all of Scotus and others of his sort perish than the books of a single Cicero or Plutarch.¹⁹⁰ Not that I condemn the former entirely; but I perceive I am the better for reading these,¹⁹¹ whereas I rise from
25 the reading of those others somehow less enthusiastic about true virtue, but more contentious. Therefore don't hesitate to present it, whatever it is.

- Chrysoglottus** While most of Marcus Tullius'¹⁹² books on philosophy seem to breathe something of divinity, I consider the one on old age, written when
30 he himself was old, his swan song,¹⁹³ as the Greek proverb puts it. Today I reread it and learned the following words by heart, since they pleased me most of all:¹⁹⁴ 'But if some god granted me power to revert from old age to childhood and cry in the cradle, I would steadfastly refuse; nor, after finishing the course,¹⁹⁵ as it were, would I like to be called back to
35 the starting-point. For what satisfaction does this life have? Rather, what hardship does it not have? But even if it does not entail hardship, it does bring with it satiety or boredom.¹⁹⁶ I have no wish to complain of life, as many men, and learned ones too, have often done. Nor am I sorry to have lived, since I have so lived that I do not think I was born in vain. And yet
40 I depart from this life as from an inn,¹⁹⁷ not from a home. Nature gave us a lodging to stop at, not to settle down in. O glorious day when I shall join

that company of souls and leave this tumult and contagion!’ Thus far Cato.¹⁹⁸ What could a Christian have said more reverently? I wish the conversations of monks, or those of monks and nuns, were all like this talk of an old pagan with young pagans.

5 **Eusebius** But someone will object that the discourse is Cicero’s invention.¹⁹⁹

Chrysoglottus To me it matters little whether the credit belongs to Cato for thinking and uttering such sentiments, or to Cicero, whose mind by the power of imagination laid hold upon such divine thoughts and whose pen described these choice themes with corresponding eloquence. Though
10 I believe that even if he did not utter those very words, Cato nevertheless was in the habit of saying things like them in conversation. Marcus Tullius was not so impudent as to depict Cato as other than he really was or, in his dialogue, to overlook decorum²⁰⁰ – an essential requirement in this kind of composition, especially when remembrance of that man was fresh in the
15 minds of the writer’s contemporaries.²⁰¹

Theodidactus²⁰² Very likely, but I’ll tell you what came to mind while you were reciting. I’ve often wondered at the fact that though everybody hopes for a long life and dreads death, I’ve found scarcely anyone – I don’t mean an aged man but one beginning to get along in years – who was so happy
20 that he wouldn’t agree with Cato when asked whether he would be a child again if he could, experiencing all the good and evil that had already fallen to his lot in life; especially if he called to mind whatever had happened to him for better or worse in years past. Recollection of pleasant things is often accompanied by shame or a bad conscience, so that the mind shrinks from
25 recalling them no less than from recalling sorrows. The wisest poets have pointed this out to us, I believe.²⁰³ According to them, it is only after souls have drunk large draughts of forgetfulness from the river Lethe that they are at last enthralled by desire for the bodies they left behind.

Uranius This is curious, to be sure, and I’ve often observed examples of it
30 myself. Yet what pleased me rather was ‘Nor am I sorry to have lived.’ Now how many Christians live soberly enough to be able to apply this old man’s statement to themselves? Most think they have not lived in vain if, at death, they can leave a large estate got by hook or by crook.²⁰⁴ But Cato’s reason for thinking he had not lived in vain was that he had been an honest, upright
35 citizen of the republic and an incorruptible magistrate, and that he left to posterity monuments of his virtue and industry. What could be uttered more divinely than his ‘I depart as from an inn, not from a home’? One may use an inn for a while, until the host tells him to leave. From his own home one is not easily driven out. And yet it often happens that a collapse or a fire
40 or some other accident forces him out; or even if none of these should occur, the building’s crumbling with age warns him to move.

Nephalius No less choice is what Socrates says in Plato: 'The human soul is placed in this body as if in a garrison'²⁰⁵ which it must not abandon except by the commander's order, or remain in longer than suits him who stationed it there.'²⁰⁶ It is the more significant that Plato said 'garrison' instead of 'house,'
 5 since we only inhabit a house; in a garrison we are assigned some duty by our commander. Nor is this out of keeping with our Scriptures, which tell us human life is sometimes a warfare,²⁰⁷ sometimes a battle.²⁰⁸

Uranius Cato's language, I think, agrees admirably with that of Paul, who, writing to the Corinthians, calls the heavenly mansion we look for after this
 10 life *oikía* and *οικητήριον*, that is, a home or dwelling.²⁰⁹ But this poor body he calls a tabernacle, *σκήνος*.²¹⁰ 'For we that are in this tabernacle,' he says, 'do groan, being burdened.'

Nephalius Neither is it out of keeping with the language of Peter: 'I think it meet,' he says, 'as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by
 15 putting you in remembrance, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle.'²¹¹ What else does Christ proclaim to us than that we should live and watch as though we were shortly to die, to exert ourselves in good deeds as though we were to live forever?²¹² When we hear that 'O glorious day,' don't we seem to hear Paul himself saying, 'I desire to depart and to be with
 20 Christ?'²¹³

Chrysoglottus How fortunate are they who await death in such a spirit! But in Cato's speech, splendid though it is, one might object to the self-confidence as expressive of a pride that ought to be very far from a Christian. Hence I think I've never read anything in pagan writers more proper to a true
 25 Christian than what Socrates spoke to Crito a little later, before drinking the hemlock: 'Whether God will approve of my works,' he said, 'I know not; certainly I have tried hard to please him. Yet I have good hope that he will accept my efforts.' Diffident as he was about his own deeds, yet, by reason of his earnest desire to obey the divine will, he conceived a strong hope that
 30 God in his goodness would accept them, because he had endeavoured to live righteously.²¹⁴

Nephalius An admirable spirit, surely, in one who had not known Christ and the Sacred Scriptures. And so, when I read such things of such men, I can hardly help exclaiming, 'St Socrates, pray for us!'²¹⁵

35 **Chrysoglottus** As for me,²¹⁶ there are many times when I do not hesitate to hope confidently that the souls of Virgil and Horace are sanctified.

Nephalius Yet how many Christians have I seen die ever so bitterly!²¹⁷ Some put their trust in what is not to be trusted; some, because of a bad conscience about their sins and because of stumbling-blocks that certain
 40 ignorant persons²¹⁸ place in the way of the dying, expire in almost hopeless despair.

310

proinde in hunc modum scripsi hanc orationem
 apud christianos, quod aptum quidem habet
 in hoc christiano, quod quod Socrates
 paulo post bibeat Ciceronem dixit Ciceronem.
 An opus quod orationem sic probaturum dicitur.
 videtur. Cetero Socrates Ciceroni suus non est
 planctus. Est tamen mihi, bonum pro
 quod Socrates orationem sit bonum solutorem
 ut Socrates sit diffidens factus sit, ut tamen
 ob amicum propositum voluntatem obsequandi
 voluntatem dicens, bonum propter quod
 foret, bonum propter bonitatem boni solutorem
 esset, quod prudenter bonum videtur. H.
 propterea mirum videtur amicum in eo qui christi
 orationem libenter non noverat. At ego pro
 ut christiano quod scripsi orationem.
 quendam faciens hoc videtur, quibus ut in
 fulcrum. quodam ob gloriam facit
 discipulos quibus idem quidam obsequium
 monitum propter diffidens ex hanc amicum
 H. Hoc mirum non sit utrum, quod quod amicum
 philosophum. Ciceronem. C. parat Socrates
 ubi est. H. orationem sit illud utrum
 profectus, ut ut dicitur, in orationem

Page from an autograph manuscript of 'The Godly Feast'

Royal Library, Copenhagen ms Thottske Saml 73 Fol

folio 310 recto (194:23-196:3 in this translation)

The lines written vertically in the left margin show that 'Sancte Socrates ora pro nobis' and the sentence containing these words were an afterthought.

Det Kongelige Bibliotek, København

Chrysoglottus No wonder those who have puzzled their heads so much over ceremonies all their lives should die thus.

Nephalius What do you mean by that word ‘ceremonies’?

Chrysoglottus I’ll tell you, but let me begin by making absolutely clear that
 5 I don’t condemn the rites and sacraments of the church; on the contrary, I approve of them most emphatically. I do condemn certain unprincipled or superstitious or (to put it as mildly as I can) simple and uninformed men who teach the people to put their trust in these things while those that make us truly Christian are neglected.²¹⁹

10 **Nephalius** I don’t quite follow you.

Chrysoglottus I’ll try to explain. If you observe the great majority of Christians, isn’t it true that to them ceremonies are the alpha and omega²²⁰ of life? How scrupulously are the ancient rites of the church performed in baptism!²²¹ *The infant waits outside the church door;*²²² exorcism²²³ and
 15 catechism²²⁴ are carried out; vows taken; Satan abjured with all his pomps and vanities;²²⁵ finally the babe is anointed, marked with the sign of the cross, salted,²²⁶ and dipped;²²⁷ sponsors are given the charge of training the child; upon payment of a sum of money they are released.²²⁸ And now at last the child is called a Christian – and is one after a fashion.²²⁹ Soon
 20 he’s anointed again;²³⁰ at length he learns to confess,²³¹ takes communion,²³² becomes accustomed to resting on holy days, to hearing divine service, to fasting at times, to abstaining from meat. And if he does these things, he’s considered a Christian beyond question. He marries – and receives another sacrament. He takes orders²³³ – and is once more anointed and consecrated;
 25 his clothes are changed, prayers said. All these I approve of, but doing them from custom rather than from conviction I don’t approve of. The notion that nothing else is needed for Christianity I reject absolutely, since a large part of mankind, while trusting to these things, loses no time in making money by hook or by crook²³⁴ and becoming enslaved to anger, lust, malice,
 30 flattery, until at last they come to death’s door. Here again ceremonies are ready. Confession is made over and over; extreme unction²³⁵ added; the Eucharist administered; sacred candles, a crucifix, holy water are at hand; indulgences produced; a papal brief displayed or brought on the spot for the dying man; a lavish funeral ordered; once again a solemn contract is made;
 35 one man shouts in the dying person’s ear – sometimes, in fact, pesters him to an earlier death if (as frequently happens) he’s too loud or well liquored.²³⁶ Though these ceremonies, especially those sanctioned by ecclesiastical usage, are acceptable, yet there are also other, more interior means of helping us to depart from this life with cheerfulness and Christian trust.

40 **Eusebius** You preach piously and truly, to be sure, but meanwhile nobody touches the food. Let no one deceive himself: I told you beforehand to expect



Title-page of 'An ardent exposition of the baptism of children,
 very necessary for one to know' (Magdeburg 1500)
 by Andreas Proles, a vicar-general of the Augustinian order
 In this woodcut the priest, holding the child, stands behind the baptismal font;
 above him is the heavenly dove. In the foreground are the parents,
 on the right the godfather or sponsor.
 Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel

nothing beyond a second course, and that a country one, lest anyone be looking forward to pheasants or woodcocks or Attic delicacies.²³⁷ Remove these things, boy, and serve the rest. You see my horn of penury, not plenty.²³⁸ This is the produce of the little gardens you saw. Don't hold back if there's something you like.

Timothy There's such variety that we're refreshed by the very sight of it.

Eusebius But – so you won't scorn my frugality altogether – this dish would have overjoyed that good Christian monk Hilarion and a hundred of his company among the monks of that age. For Paul and Antony, indeed, it would have been a month's provision.²³⁹

Timothy Nor would Peter, prince of apostles, have despised it, I believe, when he dwelt with Simon the tanner.²⁴⁰

Eusebius Nor Paul either, in my opinion, when need compelled him to work at night as a tentmaker.²⁴¹

Timothy We owe this to God's goodness. But I would rather go hungry with Peter and Paul, provided the lack of bodily nourishment were compensated by spiritual delights.

Eusebius Rather let us learn from Paul 'both to abound and to suffer need.'²⁴² When there is lack, let us thank Jesus Christ for supplying us with means of self-control and patience; when there is plenty, we should thank the generosity of one who draws us by his gifts to love of himself. Enjoying in moderation what the divine goodness has provided, we ought to be mindful of the poor – who by God's will are without that in which we abound – in order that there may be occasion of mutual goodness by each to the other.

Since we are granted enough to enable us to relieve brotherly need, we may win God's mercy; and the poor, restored by our generosity, thank God for our good will and commend us to him in their prayers.

And well does this come to mind. Here, boy, tell my wife to send what's left of the roast to our Gudula. She's a neighbour who's pregnant and poor but blessed in spirit. Her husband, an idle spendthrift, died recently, leaving her nothing but a pack of children.

Timothy Christ commanded us to give to everyone who asks.²⁴³ If I did that, I'd have to beg myself within a month.²⁴⁴

Eusebius I believe Christ means those who ask for necessities. Those who seek, nay demand or rather extort, large sums to make Lucullan²⁴⁵ feasts or – worse yet – to cater to their gluttony and lust, it is charity to refuse. More than that, it's robbery to lavish upon those who will make bad use of it that which was owed to the immediate needs of our neighbour. Hence those who build or adorn monasteries or churches at excessive cost, when meanwhile so many of Christ's living temples²⁴⁶ are in danger of starvation, shiver in their nakedness, and are tormented by want of the necessities of life, seem to me almost guilty

of a capital crime.²⁴⁷ When I was in Britain I saw St Thomas' tomb, laden with innumerable precious jewels in addition to other incredible riches. I'd rather have this superfluous wealth spent on the poor than kept for the use of officials who will plunder it all sooner or later.²⁴⁸ I'd decorate the tomb with branches
 5 and flowers; this, I think, would be more pleasing to the saint. In Lombardy²⁴⁹ I saw a certain Carthusian monastery, not far from Pavia.²⁵⁰ In it is a church built of white marble within and without, from top to bottom; and almost everything inside – altars, columns, tombs – is marble. What was the good of
 10 pouring out so much money to enable a few lone monks to sing in a marble church which even to them is a burden, not a benefit, because it's constantly overrun with visitors who go there merely to see that marble church?

There I learned of something still more foolish: that they have a legacy of three thousand ducats a year to spend on construction of the monastery.²⁵¹ And some people think it a crime to divert that money, contrary to the
 15 testator's intentions, to good works. They'd rather pull down what they build than not build at all. Since these facts are notorious, I thought I should mention them, though our own churches furnish plenty of similar examples from time to time.²⁵² This strikes me as a thirst for glory, not charity. Rich men covet a monument for themselves in churches where formerly there
 20 was not room for saints. They take care to have their likenesses carved and painted, with their names and an inscription about their gift added. And²⁵³ with these things²⁵⁴ they fill up a large portion of the church. The time will come, I suppose, when they'll insist on being buried at the very altars.

Someone will ask, 'Do you think their liberality should be refused?'
 25 By no means, if what they offer is worthy of the temple of God. But if I were a priest or a bishop, I would urge upon those thickheaded courtiers or merchants that if they wanted to have their sins forgiven in God's sight, they should spend their money secretly,²⁵⁵ for the support of those who really need it. They consider money wasted that is scattered thus, piecemeal and
 30 secretly, to relieve the immediate needs of the poor, since no memorial of it will survive for posterity! For my part, I think none is better spent than that which Christ, the most dependable debtor, wishes to be charged²⁵⁶ to him.

Timothy Don't you think what is given to monasteries well spent?

Eusebius I'd give them something if I were rich, but I'd give for their need,
 35 not their extravagance, and to those in which I perceived a zeal for true religion to flourish.

Timothy Many think what is given to public beggars is not well spent.²⁵⁷

Eusebius Something ought to be given to them, too, at times, yet with discrimination. I should think it wise for each city to look after its own
 40 and not to tolerate vagabonds²⁵⁸ roaming hither and yon – particularly the able-bodied ones, who, I imagine, need a job rather than a dole.

Timothy Then to whom do you think we should give chiefly? How much and to what extent?

Eusebius That would be very hard to define exactly.²⁵⁹ In the first place, there ought to be a will to assist everybody. Next, so far as my slender means
5 permit, I give whenever occasion presents itself, especially to those whose poverty and honesty are known to me. And if I haven't the means, I urge others to be generous.

Timothy But do you permit us to speak freely here in your kingdom?

Eusebius Oh, yes, more frankly than in your own home.

10 **Timothy** You disapprove of spending too much on churches, and yet you could have built this house for much less.

Eusebius Well, I think it's in the modest class. Or call it elegant if you prefer; certainly it's not luxurious, unless I'm mistaken. Mendicants build more splendidly. Yet these gardens of mine, such as they are, pay tax to the needy;
15 and every day I economize in something and deny myself and my family in order to be more bountiful towards the poor.

Timothy If everyone were of your mind, a great many now suffering undeserved poverty would be better off; and on the other hand, there wouldn't be so many of those stout people who deserve to learn the sobriety
20 and restraint that necessity could teach them.

Eusebius Maybe so, but shouldn't we season this flat dessert with something sweet?

Timothy We've had more than enough sweets.

Eusebius But I'll bring out what you won't dislike even if you're full.

25 **Timothy** What's that?

Eusebius A codex of the Gospels,²⁶⁰ which, since it's my most splendid possession, I'll fetch to crown the feast.²⁶¹ Read, boy, from the place where
you stopped.²⁶²

Boy 'No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love
30 the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you: Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat,²⁶³ nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?'

Eusebius Hand me the book. In this passage Jesus Christ seems to me to
35 have said the same thing twice, because in place of what he said first, 'will hate,' he presently puts 'will despise'; and for 'will love,' 'will hold to'; the meaning is the same with the persons changed.

Timothy I'm not sure I understand.

Eusebius Then let's demonstrate it mathematically,²⁶⁴ if you like. In the
40 earlier part put A for 'the one,' B for 'the other';²⁶⁵ and in the latter, put B for 'the one,' A for 'the other,' in reverse order. Now either he will hate A and

love B or will hold to B and despise A. Isn't it plain that A is twice hated and B twice loved?

Timothy Quite clear.

Eusebius But this conjunction 'or,' especially when repeated,²⁶⁶ indicates a contrary or certainly a different meaning. Otherwise wouldn't it be absurd to say, 'Either Peter will defeat me and I'll yield, or I'll yield and Peter will defeat me'?

Timothy A nice sophism,²⁶⁷ God help me!

Eusebius It will seem nice to me, too, in the end, if you solve it for me.

10 **Theophilus**²⁶⁸ My mind is dreaming and is bringing forth something, I know not what. If you order me to, I'll set it before you, whatever it is, and you'll be the interpreters or midwives.

Eusebius Though it's commonly considered unlucky to recall dreams at a feast, and hardly decent to be in labour in the presence of so many men,
15 nevertheless we'll glad to receive your dream, or, if you prefer, the offspring of your mind.

Theophilus In this utterance the action rather than the person is shifted, it seems to me. And this expression, 'one and . . . one . . . ' does not refer to A and B, but each part of the expression refers to either 'one'; so that whichever
20 'one' you choose is now opposed to what is indicated by the other. As if you should say, 'Either you will exclude A and admit B or admit A and exclude B.' You observe here that though the person remains, the action is changed; and this is so said of A that it makes no difference if you should say the same of B, in this way: 'Either you will exclude B and admit A, or admit B and
25 exclude A.'

Eusebius You've explained the problem to us acutely indeed, nor could any mathematician have demonstrated it better in the sand.

Sophronius I'm more puzzled by the part forbidding us to worry about the morrow,²⁶⁹ since Paul himself worked with his hands to get his living,²⁷⁰
30 severely rebuking lazy folk and those who are glad to live off others.²⁷¹ He warns them to work and tells them manual labour is good for them, because it enables them to help the needy.²⁷² Isn't the labour by which a poor husband supports his beloved wife and dear children pious and sanctified?

Timothy In my judgment, that question can be answered in different
35 ways.²⁷³ First, as relates particularly to those times. The apostles, who travelled far and wide for the sake of preaching the gospel, had to be relieved of the worry of getting a living. They had no time to earn their bread by manual labour, especially when they knew no craft but fishing. Now times have changed, and we all have leisure enough; we're just lazy.

40 A second solution is this: Christ did not forbid labour but anxiety. And by anxiety he meant the common feeling of men who are concerned above

all else with making a living; neglecting everything else, they attend to this alone, devoted to this single care. The Lord himself virtually asserts this when he says that the same man cannot serve two masters, since 'serving' means 'completely devoted to.' Therefore he wants the first and foremost care – not the *sole* care – to be that of spreading the gospel. For he says, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and these things shall be added unto you.'²⁷⁴ He does not say 'seek only' but 'seek first.' But 'the morrow' is an intentional exaggeration, I think, for he means the distant future. Those whose hearts are set on this world habitually worry about the future and try to prepare for it.

Eusebius We accept your interpretation. But what does he mean by saying 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat'?²⁷⁵ The body wears clothing, but the soul doesn't eat.

Timothy Here he uses the word *anima* [soul] to mean 'life.'²⁷⁶ Life is endangered if you take away food, but not if you strip off clothing, which is more for modesty than necessity. If a person suffers from nakedness, he doesn't die instantly, but starvation is death for sure.

Eusebius I don't altogether see the connection between this statement and what follows: 'Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?'²⁷⁷ For if life is of great value, we should be the more zealous to preserve it.

Timothy This argument does not dispel our uncertainty but adds to it.

Eusebius But you misinterpret Christ's meaning. By this argument he increases our trust in the Father. If the benevolent Father gave freely and of his own accord what is more precious, he will likewise add what is more common. He who gave the soul will not deny food; he who gave the body will add clothing from somewhere. Relying on his kindness, therefore, we have no reason to be distracted by anxiety over minor matters. What remains then but, using this world as though we use it not,²⁷⁸ we turn our whole care and zeal to the love of heavenly things and, utterly rejecting earthly riches²⁷⁹ together with Satan and all his wiles, with a whole and fervent heart serve God alone, who will not forsake his children?

But meanwhile nobody touches the dessert.²⁸⁰ Surely it's permissible to enjoy this, which is produced for us at home without great toil.

Timothy Our frail bodies have had quite enough.

Eusebius Your minds too, I trust.

Timothy Yes, our minds have fed even more richly.

Eusebius Then remove these things, boy, and bring the basin. Let us wash, my friends, in order that, cleansed of any fault we may have committed at this feast, we may recite a hymn to God.²⁸¹ I'll finish the one I began from Chrysostom,²⁸² if you like.

Timothy Please do.

Eusebius 'Glory to thee, O Lord; glory to thee, O thou holy one; glory to thee, O king. As now thou hast given us meat, fill us with joy and gladness in the Holy Spirit, that we may be found acceptable in thy sight, nor be shamed when thou renderest to each according to his works.'

5 **Boy** Amen.

Timothy A devout and beautiful hymn, without question.

Eusebius St Chrysostom does not disdain to interpret it, too.

Timothy Where?

Eusebius In his fifty-sixth homily on Matthew.²⁸³

10 **Timothy** I'll read it without fail this very day. But there's²⁸⁴ one thing, meantime, I want to learn from you: why do we pray for Christ's glory three times, and by the triple title of 'Lord,' 'holy one,' and 'king'?

Eusebius²⁸⁵ Because all glory belongs to him, but especially ought we to praise him by the triple name. First, because by his sacred blood he released
15 us from the devil's tyranny and claimed us as his own, whence we call him Lord. Next, because, not content with having freely pardoned all our sins, through his Spirit he also bestowed his righteousness²⁸⁶ upon us, that we might seek after holiness. And for this reason we call him holy, because he is the sanctifier of all men. Finally, because from him we hope for the
20 reward of the heavenly kingdom, where he now sits at the right hand of God the Father; hence we call him king. And all this blessedness we owe to his grace, freely granted us: that instead of having the devil as master, or tyrant rather, we have Jesus Christ for lord; instead of the dregs and filth of sin we have innocence and holiness; instead of hell the joys of the heavenly
25 life.

Timothy A truly reverent thought.

Eusebius Since now this is the first time I've had you here to a feast, I won't send you away without presents, but ones in keeping with the decor of the feast. Ho there, boy, bring my going-away gifts.²⁸⁷ Draw lots or choose
30 for yourselves, it makes no difference. They're all worth about the same – nothing, that is. These aren't the lots of Heliogabalus, by which one man wins a hundred horses and another as many flies.²⁸⁸ There are four little books, two clocks, a small lamp, and a case with Memphian pens.²⁸⁹ I think these suit you better than balsam juice or tooth powder or a mirror, if I know
35 you well.

Timothy They're all so fine that it's hard for us to choose. Distribute them yourself as you think best; then whatever one gets will be all the more welcome.

Eusebius²⁹⁰ This little book on parchment contains Solomon's proverbs.
40 It teaches wisdom, and is decorated with gold because gold symbolizes wisdom. This shall be given to our white-haired friend, that, in accordance

with evangelical teaching, wisdom be given to him who hath wisdom and he may have abundance.²⁹¹

Timothy Assuredly I'll endeavour to need it the less.

Eusebius The clock,²⁹² imported from far-off Dalmatia²⁹³ (if I may thus
5 praise my little present), will suit Sophronius,²⁹⁴ for I know how thrifty of time he is, how he won't let any part of that great treasure go without making good use of it.

Sophronius No,²⁹⁵ no; you're advising a lazy man to be diligent.

Eusebius This little book has Matthew's Gospel on parchment: worthy of a
10 jewelled cover were it not that no bookcase or cover is dearer to it than a man's heart. Then keep it there, Theophilus,²⁹⁶ to make you more like your name.

Theophilus I'll try to see that you won't regret your gift.

Eusebius Here are Paul's Epistles, which you, Eulalius, who are always
15 quoting Paul, like to carry about with you.²⁹⁷ You wouldn't have him in your mouth unless he were in your heart. After this he'll be more readily in your hands and eyes too.

Eulalius²⁹⁸ This is to give counsel, not a gift. No gift is more precious than good counsel.

Eusebius The little oil lamp²⁹⁹ will suit Chrysoglottus, an insatiable reader and, as Tully says, a mighty devourer of books.³⁰⁰

Chrysoglottus I thank you twice: first, for an uncommonly nice present; secondly, for admonishing a sleepy fellow to be alert.

Eusebius The pen case goes by rights to Theodidactus, a most graceful and
25 prolific writer;³⁰¹ and I deem these pens to be most fortunate by which the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ will be celebrated, especially by so talented an author.

Theodidactus³⁰² Would that you could furnish the fervour as you do the instruments!

Eusebius This codex contains some short works of Plutarch,³⁰³ the *Moralia*,
30 selected and skilfully copied by someone expert in Greek writing. So much piety do I find in them that I think it marvellous such Christianlike notions could have come into a pagan mind. This will be presented to Uranius,³⁰⁴ a young Hellenist. A clock remains. That's for our Nephalius,³⁰⁵ who's very
35 frugal of time.

Nephalius We thank you, not only for your little gifts but also for the testimonials. For this is not so much distributing gifts as compliments.

Eusebius My thanks to you, rather, on two counts: first, for being so good
40 about my simple style of living; secondly, for refreshing my mind with your conversation, which was equally learned and devout. I'll send you away without knowing what sort of time you've had, but undoubtedly I'll take

leave of you a better and wiser man myself. I know pipes or jesters aren't to your taste, much less dice. So, if you like, let's beguile a brief hour by seeing the other wonders of my palace.

Timothy We were just about to beg that of you.

- 5 **Eusebius** No need to beg one who promises sincerely. I suppose you've already seen enough of this summer room. It has a triple view, and whichever way you look you're confronted by the most delightful green of the gardens. With the casement windows you may, if you like, shut out the weather, should clouds or winds make it a bit disagreeable; and if the heat
10 annoys, you may shut out the sun by closing the thick shutters from the outside and the thin ones from the inside. When I lunch here I seem to eat in a garden, not a house, for the walls also have their own flourishing flowers scattered over them, and³⁰⁶ there are good pictures. Here Christ keeps the Last Supper with his chosen disciples.³⁰⁷ Here Herod celebrates his birthday
15 with a fatal feast.³⁰⁸ Here Dives of the Gospel story, shortly to go down to hell, dines sumptuously; Lazarus, soon to be received into Abraham's bosom, is driven from the gates.³⁰⁹

Timothy This story I don't quite recognize.

- Eusebius** Cleopatra is trying to outdo Antony in extravagance. She's already
20 swallowed a pearl and puts out her hand to take another one.³¹⁰ Here the Lapiths are fighting.³¹¹ Here Alexander the Great pierces Clitus with a spear.³¹² These examples warn us to be temperate at feasts and deter us from drunkenness and extravagance. Now let's go to the library. It is not furnished with a large number of books, but they have been carefully chosen.

- 25 **Timothy** There is something of the divine about this place, everything shines so.

- Eusebius** Here you see the main part of my wealth. On the table you saw nothing but glass and pewter. There isn't a silver vessel in the entire house except for one gilded cup, which I treasure out of affection for the person
30 who gave it to me. This suspended globe³¹³ puts the whole world before your eyes. Here on the walls every region is painted in a larger scale. On the other walls³¹⁴ you see pictures of famous authors.³¹⁵ To paint them all would have been an endless task. Christ, seated on the mountain with his hand outstretched, has the foremost place. The Father appears above his
35 head, saying 'Hear ye him.'³¹⁶ With wings outspread the Holy Spirit enfolds him in dazzling light.

Timothy A work worthy of Apelles,³¹⁷ so help me!

- Eusebius**³¹⁸ Adjoining the library is a study, narrow but elegant. When the board's removed you see a small hearth to use if you're cold. In summer it
40 seems a solid wall.

Timothy Everything seems to sparkle. And there's a delightful scent.

Eusebius I try very hard to keep the house shining and fragrant. To do both is not expensive. The library has its own balcony, overlooking the garden; connected with it is a shrine.

Timothy A place fit for deity.

- 5 **Eusebius** Now let's go on to those three galleries above the loggias you saw, facing the inner garden. These galleries have a view on each side, but through windows that can be closed – especially in these walls that do not face the inner garden – to make the house safer. Here on the left, because there is more light and the wall has few windows, is painted in
10 order the entire life of Jesus as related by the four evangelists, up to the sending forth of the Holy Spirit and the first preaching of the apostles from Acts.³¹⁹ Place names are added, too, to enable the spectator to learn by which water or on which mountain the event took place, also captions summarizing the whole story, for example the words of Jesus, 'I will; be
15 thou clean.'³²⁰ Opposite are corresponding figures and prophecies of the Old Testament, particularly from the prophets and Psalms – which contain nothing other than the life of Christ and the apostles, told in a different manner.³²¹ Here I stroll sometimes, conversing with myself and meditating upon that inexpressible purpose of God by which he willed to restore the
20 human race through his Son. Sometimes my wife, or a friend pleased by sacred subjects, keeps me company.

Timothy Who could be bored in this house?

- Eusebius** No one who has learned to live with himself.³²² In the frieze above, as though outside it, are added busts of the popes with their names;
25 opposite, of the Caesars, to help one remember history.

- At each end³²³ a small chamber juts out; here one can rest and from it see the orchard and my little birds.³²⁴ In the farthest corner of the meadow you see another small building, where we sometimes dine in summer and where anyone of the household who is stricken with a contagious disease is
30 cared for.

Timothy Some people deny that such diseases are to be shunned.

- Eusebius** Then why do they shun a pit or shun poison? Or do they fear this less because they don't see it? Neither do we see the venom of a basilisk, which darts from his eyes.³²⁵ When the situation absolutely required, I
35 wouldn't hesitate to risk my life. To risk it without reason is reckless folly; to endanger the lives of others is cruelty.

- There are other things, too, that are worth seeing. I'll ask my wife to show them to you. Stay here the next three days and consider this house your own. Feast your eyes, feast your minds. For I have business elsewhere;
40 I must ride to some neighbouring villages.

Timothy Money matters?

Eusebius I wouldn't leave such friends for the sake of money.

Timothy Perhaps there's hunting somewhere.

Eusebius Hunting, yes, but I'm hunting something other than boars and stags.

5 **Timothy** What, then?

Eusebius I'll tell you. In one village a certain friend lies critically ill. The doctor fears for his body; I fear for his soul. Since, in my opinion, he's scarcely prepared to depart as befits a Christian, I'm going to be at hand with good counsel, so that he may be helped whether he dies or recovers.

10 In another village a serious difference has arisen between two men – not bad men, to be sure, but stubborn. If the quarrel should become sharper, I fear it would draw many others into a feud. I'll try my best to bring them to good terms again, for I have bonds of long standing with both. These are my quarry. If I have good hunting, we'll have a victory celebration³²⁶ here
15 without delay.

Timothy Good hunting in a good cause! Our prayer is that Christ, not Delia,³²⁷ may favour you.

Eusebius I'd rather have this prize than inherit two thousand ducats.

Timothy Will you return soon?

20 **Eusebius** Not until I've tried everything. Hence I can't name a definite time. Meanwhile make yourselves at home, and farewell.

Timothy May the Lord Jesus prosper your going and coming.

NOTES

- 1 Eusebius . . . Uranius] In the brief text of 'The Godly Feast' printed in the March 1522 edition of the *Colloquia*, the speakers are Adolphus, Balbus, Cornelius, Durandus, and Everardus. The names were changed in the later 1522 edition to those found here. Smith (*Key* 9) conjectures that the original names were those of Erasmus' acquaintances and that in the full text Eusebius represents Froben; Nephalius, Botzheim; Sophronius, Conradus Pellicanus. Other names too, it is claimed, point to real persons whom Erasmus knew (*Key* 11). Possibly, but there is no proof. Of more importance is the appropriateness of these Greek names to the purpose and spirit of the occasion: Eusebius 'devout'; Timothy 'one who honours God'; Theophilus 'friend of God'; Chrysoglottus 'golden-tongued'; Uranius 'heavenly'; Sophronius 'prudent,' 'learned'; Eulalius 'sweetly speaking'; Nephalius 'sober'; Theodidactus 'taught of God.'
- 2 With the opening lines compare those of *Antibarbari*, published two years earlier (CWE 23 19–21). Erasmus, who dwelt mainly in towns and cities, is sometimes thought to have had no eye for scenery. This notion is an exaggeration. His pleasure in gardens and landscape is expressed infrequently but often enough to be accepted as sincere; for example during his residence at Anderlecht (see introduction 172 above). Varieties of flowers and herbs

- in gardens afforded him, as they do Eusebius in the colloquy, both esthetic and ethical satisfaction; he saw sermons in stones, finding nature full of invitations to literary, symbolical, moral, and religious interpretation. It is true that his interest in nature was largely that of the moralist and rhetorician, as in this colloquy, in 'Sympathy,' and in the *Paraboliae* (CWE 23 219–77), but that does not mean he was attracted solely by the figurative aspects of it. Invariably he comes to these when writing of 'this goodly frame, the earth,' yet he had antecedent interest in natural phenomena too (see for example 'A Problem'), even though his knowledge of them came mainly from books. See Margolin 'L'idée de nature dans la pensée d'Erasme' in his *Recherches érasmiennes* 9–44.
- 3 Erasmus was notoriously sensitive to smells, to smoky or overheated rooms (see for example the opening pages of 'A Fish Diet' and the description of the stove room in 'Inns'), and to the bad air in English houses (Allen Epp 1489:1–9, 1532:1–33 / CWE Ep 1489:2–11, 1532:2–37, Allen Ep 2209:165–73).
 - 4 A favourite aphorism; *Adagia* I ii 4
 - 5 *foeneratores*. Not a class of men Erasmus was fond of, but they were less obnoxious than greedy merchants (*Adagia* I ix 12 LB II 337B–C).
 - 6 The mendicant orders were commonly accused of this policy. See 'The Funeral' 768:30–4.
 - 7 That is, instead of living in meditative solitude or with a small company of followers, they are active and enterprising wherever they find the busy hum of men. Novitiates of the Pythagorean brotherhood were said to observe five years of complete silence (*Adagia* IV iii 72). The true philosopher never goes to the agora and for the most part ignores the concerns of the populace (Plato *Theaetetus* 173C–174A).
 - 8 Plato *Phaedrus* 230D. Jacob Batt, who expounds and defends Erasmian arguments in *Antibarbari*, is equally certain that trees have nothing to teach men; if Bernard of Clairvaux professed to have oaks and beeches for his teachers, he was speaking figuratively. See CWE 23 118:23–120:4.
 - 9 What else ... goodness?] Omitted in the March 1522 edition; added in the July–August 1522 edition. With the sentiment compare 'The Epicurean' 1084:30–1085:9. 'The Country is both the Philosopher's Garden and his Library, in which he Reads and Contemplates the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God' (William Penn *Some Fruits of Solitude* [1693] no 223).
 - 10 *dapes inemptas*; *Epodes* 2.48
 - 11 *Pepones* are large melons (or pumpkins); *melones* small ones or cucumbers (Pliny *Naturalis historia* 19.65).
 - 12 *Vera historia* 2.13–14; see 'Benefices' n3.
 - 13 Nine: four guests, four 'shadows,' and the host. Even in the March 1522 text the guests were invited by their host (Adolphus, soon to be rebaptized Eusebius) to bring their 'shadows' to the luncheon with them (k3; ASD 1-3 232:36). The shadows are Sophronius, Eulalius, Nephalius, and Theodidactus. On the number of guests see 'The Profane Feast' n102. On the term *umbræ* 'shadows' see 'Additional formulae' 124:25–6 and n24. The shadows take part in the discussion, but their names were not added to the cast of characters printed below the title of the dialogue in the July–August 1522 or any other early edition I have examined, including that of March 1533.

- 14 *Adagia* II vii 69, attributed to Socrates; cf *Apophthegmata* LB IV 155E.
- 15 *prandium*. Erasmus orders *prandium* for ten o'clock when stopping at an inn in Cologne in 1518 (Allen Ep 867:67–9). *Prandium* was much closer to the modern luncheon than to dinner, and was usually a light meal. *Coena* was the main meal of the day, *convivium* a dinner party or banquet. Breakfast was not yet a universal custom. It is not mentioned in the account of the schoolboy's day in 'Youth.'
- 16 I'll arrange it.] The March 1522 text ends here.
- 17 Boy . . . gate.] Added in the August 1523 edition
- 18 *nidulus*, on which see *De concordia* LB V 484D
- 19 If this house is indeed a palace and Eusebius a king, the cook may be called countess (*culinae praelecta*).
- 20 This figure of the heavenly gatekeeper is the first of many symbols, pictorial and verbal, encountered in Eusebius' house and garden. Memory – so essential in medieval and Renaissance doctrines of learning – is assisted or reinforced by present and material, as well as by imagined, scenes and objects, 'so that what may aid memory and learning is constantly before the eye,' as Erasmus says elsewhere (*De ratione studii* CWE 24 671:5–25).
- 21 Appropriately, since these are the languages of the Bible. The Latin version is of course the Vulgate, universally used in the West for nearly a millennium before Erasmus' birth. The Collegium Trilingue at the University of Louvain was founded, and enthusiastically supported by Erasmus, as a centre for study of these languages. See 'The Epithalamium' n19.
- 22 Fabulous character, said to have been an Argonaut, who could see through rocks and trees. See *Adagia* II i 54; *Parabola* CWE 23 189:27; *De copia* CWE 24 392:2.
- 23 Matt 19:17
- 24 Literally 'I see the Greek but it doesn't see me'
- 25 *Adagia* I ii 38
- 26 Acts 3:19. Theophilus quotes the Greek text.
- 27 Hab 2:4 (quoted in Rom 1:17), the text so decisive for Luther. Chrysoglossus quotes the Hebrew (which is omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript). In 1504 Erasmus took up Hebrew for a time (Allen Ep 181:36–8 / CWE Ep 181:41–5); in 1516 he is said to have been working on it again (Allen Ep 423:62–3 / CWE Ep 423:65–6). He depended on learned friends such as Johannes Oecolampadius, Wolfgang Capito, and the Amerbach brothers (Allen Ep 396:271–6 / CWE Ep 396:292–7) for assistance when he got into difficulties. Now and then he quotes or transliterates Hebrew words in his letters and his *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* (LB VI). He could argue over Hebrew words (*Apologia ad Iacobum Fabrum Stapulensem* LB IX 48C–E), and he composed an epitaph in Hebrew for Johann Froben (Allen Ep 1900:132n). Weakness in Hebrew language and history, he said late in life, deterred him from undertaking a commentary on the whole book of Psalms (Allen Ep 2315:171–5). To a critic who taunted him about weakness in Hebrew, he retorted that other writers on the Psalms might at least imitate him by consulting learned men and, when unable to reach conclusions, suspend judgment (*Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 770F). See Basil Hall 'Erasmus: Biblical Scholar and Reformer' in *Erasmus* ed T.A. Dorey (Albuquerque 1970) 91–3 and Chomarat *Grammaire*

- et rhétorique* I 321–44; G. Lloyd Jones *The Discovery of Hebrew in Tudor England* (Manchester 1983).
- 28 Eusebius] The name is omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript.
- 29 Mark 7:34
- 30 John 14:6. Of this verse Erasmus observed that the definite article preceding each noun emphasizes that Christ is not just any way but the true way (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 396E, and see *Precationes* LB V 1198F–1199A).
- 31 Rev 1:8. Eusebius quotes the Greek text.
- 32 Ps 34:11 (33:12 Vulg); the Hebrew texts quoted on this page appear in printed editions of the *Colloquies* from July–August 1522 on, but are omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript. On this verse see *Enarratio in psalmum XXXIII* LB V 402A. For Erasmus' writings on the Psalms see 'Youth' n44.
- 33 The prayer that follows is included, with a few slight changes, in *Precationes* LB V 1210A.
- 34 Roman fertility god, protector of vineyards and gardens, where statues of him were placed; 'filthy' because represented with a phallus (*Adagia* III iii 63; *De copia* CWE 24 388:17n). Erasmus may have seen an obscene example in one of the illustrations in a celebrated book published by Aldo Manuzio in 1499, the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* purportedly by Francesco Colonna, on which see Charles Mitchell 'Archaeology and Romance in Renaissance Italy' in *Italian Renaissance Studies* ed E.F. Jacob (London 1960) 461–8 and Martin Lowry *The World of Aldus Manutius* (Oxford and Ithaca 1979) 118–25. Luther, misunderstanding this passage, rashly accused Erasmus of comparing Christ with Priapus (wa *Tischreden* 4 or *Clemen* 8 no 4899).
- 35 John 4:13–14; Matt 11:28. In his *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 63B–65D Erasmus has a long note on 'my yoke is easy' (Matt 11:30), contrasting the precepts of Christ with the rigours of Jewish law and the simplicity of Christ's teaching with the unprofitable metaphysics and disputatious temerity of scholastic theologians. On Scripture as a fountain of comfort for the distressed see Erasmus' preface *pio lectori* to his Paraphrase on Matthew (LB VII **3), published earlier than this colloquy. Like so many objects in Eusebius' garden and house, the fountain is, as he says, a symbol of spiritual and biblical verity.
- 36 'According to the psalmist,' 'thirsty'] These words are not in the Copenhagen manuscript.
- 37 Ps 42:1–2 (41:2 Vulg). The stag is sometimes a symbol of the human heart, and at other times a symbol of repentance (Picinelli *Mundus symbolicus* book 5 nos 184, 185, 189). The words 'after tasting the flesh of serpents' are not in the received text of the psalm but were familiar from older commentaries. Augustine says that to assuage his thirst after killing serpents the stag hastens to springs of water: 'The serpents are your sins. Destroy the serpents of iniquity; then you will long still more eagerly for the fountain of truth' (*Enarratio in psalmum* XLI 3 PL 36 465). The *Glossa ordinaria* on the Vulgate says that the stag, poisoned by sniffing the serpent, is cured by drinking water. That stags kill serpents by drawing them out of holes with their breath is attested by Aelian *De natura animalium* 2.9 and Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.118, but they

do not say that this manner of killing serpents makes stags intolerably thirsty. This addition apparently originated with Augustine and served his homiletic purpose. See further CHB I 558.

- 38 Gardens not only pleasant but conducive to thought and conversation. Because Epicurus sometimes taught in his Athenian garden his followers were known as philosophers of the garden (Diogenes Laertius 10.10.57). Eusebius' villa has a small garden in the forecourt, which the guests see as soon as they arrive and then inspect more closely. Then they visit and admire these 'Epicurean gardens' in the courtyard, later still a large garden, in the rear of the villa, which is divided into two parts, for the cultivation of edible and medicinal plants (182:4-7). In addition Eusebius calls their attention to the painted gardens on the walls of the galleries (179:25-33).
- 39 *turmae*, a military term describing a troop of thirty or thirty-two cavalymen
- 40 *Adagia* I iv 38, from Gellius preface 19
- 41 *numen*, as at 'Youth' 91:19
- 42 had . . . made] Latin *manu facta*, which is omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript but added in the August 1523 edition. The reference is to small, geometrically placed beds, common in humanist gardens. They were neatly edged with low wattle fences, planks, bricks, or miniature box hedges.
- 43 Terence *Phormio* 454; *Adagia* I iii 7
- 44 180:1-3 below. There are also three galleries above the loggias, which are shown to the guests after lunch; see 206:5-21.
- 45 So Seneca *De beneficiis* 4.34.1, and see *Adagia* I ii 15.
- 46 They now turn to the frescoes on the walls of the galleries.
- 47 The variety of objects and painted or decorated surfaces in this colloquy is one of its principal points of interest for literary historians. Cave has shown how the mottoes, descriptions, and pictures all reinforce the implicit harmony of art and reality. The discussions of biblical texts in the central part of the dialogue seem at first disparate from the descriptions in the first and third parts, but there too an attentive reader finds phrases, statements, and questions illuminating or completing the tensions between appearance and reality (see n61 below). Descriptions of the house and garden may be taken as a 'paradigm of actively deployed *enargeia*' (Cave 'Enargeia' 10; see introduction 173 above). *Enargeia*, vividness or *evidentia*, is a method of enrichment by which, Erasmus says in *De copia*, 'instead of setting out the subject in bare simplicity we fill in the colours and set it up like a picture to look at, so that we seem to have painted the scene rather than described it, and the reader seems to have seen rather than read' (CWE 24 577:8-13). In 'The Godly Feast' nature and art, the real garden and the painted one, give equal delight to the visitors. *Copia*, abundance or richness of expression and subject-matter, a topic prominent in Erasmus' writings on language and style, is applicable also, as in the present context, to cultivated nature and even to the furnishing of houses. In their variety of visual delights, house and garden in the colloquy exhibit a richness and luxuriance Erasmus and his contemporaries found not only pleasing but unfailingly instructive. There is a brief illustration of *copia* in language in the colloquy preceding 'The Godly Feast,' but to appreciate Erasmus' conception of *copia*, its principles and scope, a reader must go to his

treatise *De copia*; the basic idea of *copia* has applications relevant to the aesthetic and ethical concerns of this dialogue as well as to linguistic range or rhetorical amplitude in composition.

- 48 A brief allusion – clearly intended as a truism familiar to those present, yet illuminating in this context – to the Christian doctrine of creation by the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable God through his Word (Col 1:15–17). Because the phrase occurs in a passage celebrating the variety and diversity of nature and of artistic creativeness, both of them gifts of the creator, we are reminded of another vastly influential theological and metaphysical idea of creation: the myth of divine goodness and fecundity set forth in the *Timaeus* of Plato; see particularly *Timaeus* 23D–47E. Whether Eusebius and his guests knew his work we cannot tell. In any event, familiarity with it adds something to a reader's understanding of such commonplaces as 'the goodness of God' here and elsewhere in this colloquy; cf 'The Epicurean' as cited in n9 above.
- 49 Erasmus writes (1523) in similar language of Botzheim's house in Constance; see n314 below.
- 50 The night owl, sacred to Athena. Its flight was thought to be a lucky omen and a symbol of victory; *Adagia* I i 76.
- 51 Greek in the original. Because of its association with Athena the owl was a symbol of good counsel.
- 52 See *Adagia* III vii 1 and 'Patterns' n78.
- 53 See 'Sympathy' 1042:15–16 and n53 and *Adagia* III vii 1 LB II 874E.
- 54 Timothy . . . flute player.] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 55 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 25.89
- 56 A symbol of fickleness, inconstancy, and greed. See *Adagia* III iv 1; *Parabola* CWE 23 144:17–19, 234:5–7, 241:7–10, 252:6–8, 262:28–30.
- 57 Because it feeds on air; it is therefore a symbol of flattery. Plutarch *Moralia* 53D *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur*; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.122
- 58 The Pliny manuscripts say the chameleon 'is usually about wild fig-trees' (see *Naturalis historia* trans H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, 10 vols [Cambridge, Mass and London 1938–62] III 86n).
- 59 *Parabola* CWE 23 144:17–19, 234:5–7; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 823A
- 60 *Adagia* II vii 66; attempting something for which one is grotesquely unfitted
- 61 Indistinctly and cursorily. Cf 1 Cor 13:12. Whether the phrase is proverbial is doubtful. Erasmus includes it in *Adagia* III i 49 but with a single quotation, from Cicero *De oratore* 1.162, where it is used of a country house filled with decorations and objects of art. Erasmus explains the metaphor as a reference to the practice of merchants who place their wares behind gratings or screens to allow them to be seen but not handled. Cave argues persuasively in *The Cornucopian Text* (introduction 174 above) 106–7 that the lattice or *transenna* is a key to the ambivalence, shifting perceptions, and gradual approach to truth in the discussion in 'The Godly Feast.' Cf Augustine on 'seeing through a glass darkly' (1 Cor 13:12) in *De Trinitate* 15.8.14–15.10.18 PL 42 1067–71 and Erasmus *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1143F.
- 62 Which Erasmus had opportunity to observe during his years there
- 63 On these and their uses *Adagia* I viii 51; Gellius 17.15; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 25.48–61; 'The New Mother' 598:40.

- 64 These lines on the scorpion, wolfsbane (aconite), and hellebore summarize Pliny *Naturalis historia* 27.6. See also Theophrastus *Historia plantarum* 9.16.3–8.
- 65 Greek in the original, from Theocritus 10.17; quoted in *Adagia* II vi 11 with analogous passages from other Greek poets
- 66 Its gaze was thought fatal to man; its breath could burst rocks. See Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.78, 29.66; 'Sympathy' n26; *Parabolae* CWE 23 250:1; *Lingua* LB IV 694C–D / ASD IV-1A 86:15–87:24 / CWE 29 320.
- 67 Pun on 'basilisk,' a diminutive of βασιλεύς 'king'
- 68 These lines anticipate the discussion of Prov 21:1–3 with which the discussion at lunch begins. On the dictum 'Oderint dum metuant,' a favourite with writers on tyranny, see *Adagia* II ix 62. It is most familiar in Cicero *De officiis* 1.97, 2.23 and Seneca *De clementia* 1.12.4. It is often found in Erasmus.
- 69 For other anecdotes about lizards and snakes see 'Sympathy' 1036:9–1038:15.
- 70 Here . . . egg.] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript. The bite of the dipsas was fabled to cause intolerable thirst; Lucian *Dipsades* 4–8; Aelian *De natura animalium* 6.51.
- 71 *politiam*. For a polity is the mark or *nota* of ants, as Erasmus observes in *Adagia* I ii 24; cf Pliny *Naturalis historia* 11.108. But Aristotle says that ants recognize no master, and each is his own ruler; *Historia animalium* 1.1 488a12.
- 72 Prov 6:6: 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise.'
- 73 *Satires* 1.1.32–4
- 74 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 11.111
- 75 On these creatures as friend and enemy of man see 'Sympathy' 1038:16–36, with the notes.
- 76 Greek in the original
- 77 There are many kinds. The octopus is meant here (Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.90).
- 78 a trapper] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 79 Timothy . . . like a yacht.] Added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 80 Greek in the original. See *Adagia* I x 14. Pliny (*Naturalis historia* 9.90) describes how the shellfish overcomes the octopus.
- 81 A polyp believed to have a membrane that served as a sail. See Aristotle *Historia animalium* 4.1 525a20–1, 9.37 622b5; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.88.
- 82 *liburnicarum gaudens imagine* 'pleased to be like one of the Liburnian galleys,' fast-sailing vessels used in the Adriatic; cf Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.63.
- 83 Electric ray fish. Cf Pliny 9.144; *Parabolae* CWE 23 231:28–30.
- 84 *posticum*. On this word as 'back door to the garden' see *Adagia* IV vi 52.
- 85 wife and] Added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 86 enclosed . . . branches] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript
- 87 King of the Phaeacians, who had a splendid palace and gardens; Ulysses was entertained by him (*Odyssey* books 6–7).
- 88 For examples see 'Sympathy' 1042–1043:2.
- 89 footbridge] *ponticulo pensili*; *pensili*, literally 'hanging,' was added in the August 1524 edition. The phrase can mean a bridge standing on supports (cf Columella 1.6.16, 2.2.11) or a drawbridge (as in Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 5.59).
- 90 On bees, and why they are attractive, see *Parabolae* CWE 23 259:38–261:14.

- 91 He keeps this promise beginning at 206:5.
- 92 So guests are warned in *Antibarbari* CWE 23 122:3–5.
- 93 The table (*mensa*) and consequently the meals served there were sacred (Plutarch *Moralia* 279E *Quaestiones Romanae*, 704B *Quaestiones convivales*), as Erasmus notes in *Adagia* I vi 27.
- 94 Ancient Christians regarded all bread as holy, in remembrance of the Last Supper (Erasmus on 1 Cor 10:16 in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 711E).
- 95 A custom of pre-Christian origin. See Colet's commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius' *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 3.3 (*Opera* III 90 [English], 225 [Latin]) and *Adagia* I ix 55, where Erasmus characteristically compares the irreverence and recklessness of sacrificing *illotis manibus* 'with unwashed hands' to the rashness of men who presume to interpret theology and Scripture without knowing Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. A more mundane reason than the one given by Eusebius is quoted by Abel Lefranc from a sixteenth-century manual: 'Il faut laver à la vue de la compagnie . . . quoique tu n'en eusses pas besoin, afin que ceux en soient accerténés qui mettent la main au même plat' (*La vie quotidienne au temps de la Renaissance* [Paris 1938] 149).
- 96 'Grace before meals sanctifies everything' ('The Epicurean' 1085:25).
- 97 Matt 14:19, 15:36, 26:26; Mark 6:41, 8:6; Luke 22:19; John 6:11. See 'Youth' n21.
- 98 From Chrysostom's homily 55 (sometimes numbered 56) on Matthew 16:24 PG 58 545. See also *Precationes* LB V 1210D. Chrysostom attributes the grace to certain eremites but says they use it after the meal. Eusebius quotes the first part of it here as a blessing before the meal; when the meal is finished he uses the rest of it as a grace (203:1–4 below). Erasmus seems to have been familiar with different versions of this text. See ASD I-3 240:291–4n.
- 99 See 176:10 and n13 above.
- 100 Sophronius . . . the other places.] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 101 As host
- 102 Timothy] The name is added in the July–August 1522 edition.
- 103 With several slight changes these and Eusebius' next words, 'May he mingle . . . hearts,' are in *Precationes* LB V 1210C. Christ is the invisible guest, a real but spiritual presence at this meal, and is invoked in the fervent hope that he will hallow this occasion and 'penetrate our hearts.'
- 104 Standard appetizers at Erasmian *convivia* (see 'A Feast of Many Courses' n10), whether by preference or in imitation of Roman custom (Roman dinners began with eggs and ended with fruit; cf *Adagia* II iv 86). Erasmus was fastidious about salads. In a letter of 1526 Stephen Gardiner, then on the threshold of his political and ecclesiastical career, reminded Erasmus that sixteen years earlier in Paris he had met Erasmus frequently at the house of an Englishman named Eden with whom he lived as a *famulus* or *puer*. Erasmus, every time he was there, would give the boy instructions about preparing lettuce cooked in butter and vinegar. 'I was that boy,' Gardiner tells him (Allen Ep 1669:18–32; for Erasmus' reply see Ep 1745:1–8).
- 105 An ancient one; cf Gellius 13.11.5 and Younger Pliny *Letters* 3.1.9. Erasmus may have in mind Jerome (Ep 43.1), who says Origen always had some edifying text read during meals. The Benedictine rule (chapter 38) stipulated such reading. Erasmus usually had a servant-pupil read to him during meals. Colet liked to

- have passages from Proverbs and Paul's letters (including the texts read and discussed at this Erasmian luncheon) read at meals (Allen Ep 1211:312–18 / CWE Ep 1211:344–9); so did More. Reading at meals was customary in Utopia (Yale CWM 4 144:6–8) and in More's home.
- 106 Erasmus disliked the noisy conviviality of Germans (*Apophthegmata* LB IV 163F; cf 'Inns' 374:33–41).
- 107 Since moral virtue is the result of habit, and the proper pleasures of an activity increase with the exercise of habit; Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.1 1103a14–1103b2, 10.5 1175a29–37, 10.9 1179b20–1180a9
- 108 Prov 21:1–3. The Vulgate text is: 'Sicut divisiones aquarum, ita cor regis in manu Domini; quocunque voluerit, inclinabit illud. Omnis via viri recta sibi videtur; appendit autem corda Dominus. Facere misericordiam et iudicium magis placet Domino quam victimae.'
- 109 *Naturalis historia* preface 22–3. Pliny's remarks are echoed in Erasmus' comments on notes for an edition of *De officiis* (Allen Ep 152:16–19 / CWE Ep 152:20–3). Even when going on a brief holiday in September 1519, Erasmus took with him and reread *De officiis*, *De amicitia*, and *De senectute* (Allen Ep 1013:26–31 / CWE Ep 1013:33–8), works he praises in this colloquy. See 192:16–193:15 and n187 below.
- 110 *De officiis* is recommended reading for princes in the *Institutio principis christiani* (LB IV 587F–588A / ASD IV-1 180:448–50 / Born 201 / CWE 27 251).
- 111 Wine and pepper add flavour to insipid beets; see o Martial 13.13, and cf 'Courtship' 258:34.
- 112 *idiotis*; see *Supputatio* LB IX 636D on Erasmus' use of this word. When Colet had a text from Proverbs or Paul read during a meal, he invited comments from learned guests and 'etiam idiotis' (Allen Ep 1211:316). On the idea of 'searching the Scriptures,' even by laymen, see Craig R. Thompson 'Scripture for the Ploughboy and Some Others' in *Studies in the Continental Background of Renaissance English Literature: Essays Presented to John L. Lievsay* ed Dale B.J. Randall and George W. Williams (Durham, NC 1977) 3–28 and, on 'The Godly Feast' in particular, 'Better Teachers than Scotus or Aquinas' in *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 2, Proceedings of the Southeastern Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Summer 1966, ed John L. Lievsay (Durham, NC 1968) 114–45. Erasmus deprecated attempts at interpretation of difficult passages by brash and ignorant laity (*Supputatio* LB IX 636E–F), but the speakers in this colloquy, although laymen, are both educated and modest. Even the uneducated can discuss difficult topics profitably if they do so intelligently and in the proper spirit, as is shown by the butcher and the fishmonger in 'A Fish Diet.'
- 113 According to Erasmus, learning is granted to few but everyone can be a devout Christian. 'I dare add this, that everyone may be a theologian' (*Paraclesis* [1516] LB V 141F, VI *4; and see *Supputatio* LB IX 552C–554B).
- 114 Matt 18:20
- 115 Eusebius, Timothy, Sophronius, and Theophilus comment on the texts in Proverbs; the others later on other texts.
- 116 The standard medieval commentators, who (with the exception of Theophylact) were in Erasmus' opinion much inferior to patristic ones. Eusebius and his friends refer to Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Theophylact but not to later exegetes.

- 117 The expositions of the Vulgate text that follow are neither formal nor technical. All of them differ, and are meant to differ, in organization and manner from the customary commentaries of academic doctors. The differences serve to authenticate the sincerity and modesty of the speakers and to enhance the interest of their contributions to this exegetical feast. Their interpretations should be read with the occasion and setting of the dialogue in mind.

On the principles and practices of interpretation, and Erasmus' judgments of the senses of Scripture, the most important statements are in *Enchiridion* LB V 6E-9A, 29A-30F / Holborn 30:26-35:1, 70:31-73:23 / CWE 66 32-5, 66-70; *Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 117A-132A / Holborn 259:28-293:18; *Ecclesiastes* book 3, particularly LB V 1026C-1062A, where he often refers to patristic sources; and of course his *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* in LB VI. He has reservations about, but does not altogether reject, the conventional (medieval) fourfold distinctions of 1/ literal or grammatical or historical meaning, terms he sometimes uses synonymously; and three kinds of non-literal or figurative or spiritual sense: 2/ moral or tropological, so common in his own writings and commentaries, 3/ allegorical, and 4/ anagogical or mystical. These meanings are summarized in a medieval mnemonic verse: 'Littera gesta docet; quid credas allegoria. / Moralis quid agas; quo tendas anagogia.' A good brief introduction to them for the English reader is Harry Caplan 'The Four Senses of Scriptural Interpretation and the Medieval Theory of Preaching' *Speculum* 4 (1929) 282-90. On medieval study and exposition of the Bible see Beryl Smalley *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* 2nd ed (Oxford 1952; repr Notre Dame, Ind 1964) and CHB II chapter 6 (155-279). On Erasmus in relation to the medieval tradition see CHB II chapter 10 (492-505).

The terms of the four senses mentioned above were not exact, nor is Erasmus always consistent in his use of them. He shows impatience with the apparent belief of some commentators that these senses were always, everywhere, and by everyone defined or understood precisely. On the contrary they are sometimes used arbitrarily, or distinctions are multiplied unnecessarily, or one sense flows into another. Moreover we should remember, first, that in the long history of Christian exegesis of the Bible various commentators had their favourite methods and emphases, and second, that it cannot be assumed that such terms as 'allegory' or 'typology' had the same meanings or connotations they have today for editors or critics of secular and vernacular texts – a fact literary scholars sometimes forget. For Erasmus, allegory is very often merely a synonym for 'metaphor' or 'figure.' It is what is left, so to speak, when the 'grammatical' (historical or literal) sense of a word or words is unintelligible or unacceptable to the reverent reader or commentator (for example in Gen 3:8, God 'walking in the garden in the cool of the day' or in Gen 6:6 repenting that he had made man on the earth); see *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1077E. Allegory, as Augustine had written, was the term employed 'cum aliquid aliud videtur sonare in verbis et aliud in intellectu significare' (*Enarratio in psalmum ciii* 13 PL 37 1347). In patristic biblical exegesis it was the symbolic sense. In the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10) the traveller is Adam (man); Jerusalem is the holy city from whose blessedness he has fallen; Jericho signifies our mortality; the thieves are the devil and his crew, who rob him of his immortality; the priest and Levite who pass by without giving assistance are

the priesthood and diaconate of the Old Testament; the Samaritan is the Lord; the inn to which the Samaritan takes the stricken traveller is the church; and so on (Augustine *Quaestiones evangeliorum* 2.19 PL 35 1340). Indeed virtually all serious literature is symbolic; all the poetry of Homer and Virgil is allegorical, as Erasmus remarks in *Enchiridion* LB v 7F / CWE 66 33.

Distinct from allegory in use though not always in name was typology, the interpretation of later events by earlier ones now perceived or believed to have prefigured them. Thus the preference of Isaac for Jacob prefigured the divine protection of Israel. The most characteristic typology found 'types' of actions or persons in the Old Testament prefiguring those of the New; Adam and David prefigured Christ. Interpretation of much of the Old Testament by writers of the New Testament was inescapably typological. In the Old Testament the New is concealed; in the New Testament the Old is revealed (Augustine *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* 2.73 PL 34 623). This perception was invaluable for theologians and commentators, for history before the Christian revelation, as Erasmus teaches, was preparation for that revelation (see *Antibarbari* CWE 23 59–61). The brazen serpent of Num 21:8–9, hung on a tree by Moses, was the 'type' or anticipation of Christ on the cross. At times, however, Erasmus is less than satisfactory, because less than clear, on the difference between allegory – a term hardly susceptible of exact and exclusive definition – and typology. How, for instance, does the typology of the brazen serpent differ from allegory if a 'type' is what we have 'when the deeds narrated signify something different'? His answer is that allegory is found more in doctrines and precepts, for example what the law of Moses taught about priestly dress, rules of sacrifice, circumcision, clean and unclean foods. But with respect to method, allegory and typology are the same (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 1043B, and see 'Faith' 426:12–16 and n54).

Erasmus is fully aware of formidable difficulties in these matters and of disparities in ancient and 'modern' exegesis. He is more comfortable, in fact, with three than with four senses: literal (or grammatical or historical), spiritual (comprising both allegorical and typological), and tropological. Or even two; he notes that ancient exegetes used only two senses, literal and spiritual. (The tropological or moral sense is always present or implied in a text.) These were expanded by later commentators to four and even seven. He condemns the tendency of some theologians to apply distinctions too readily. He insists on simplifying them. The categories may be useful, but he refuses to be tyrannized by them. In his annotations on the New Testament (LB VI) he is concerned very often with linguistic, rhetorical, and grammatical questions – grammatical in the larger as well as the narrower sense of the word – and he invariably emphasizes precise knowledge and understanding of language as the indispensable starting-point, the basis for interpretation. Recognition and acceptance of such insistence on language is a prerequisite for understanding Erasmus' conceptions of learning and teaching, not only of sacred texts but of all texts. Critical readers of any serious literature, be it pagan or Christian, must ponder meanings, tropes and figures, structure and style. For grammar is 'the basis of all the disciplines,' not merely of the arts of reading and writing (see *Ecclesiastes* LB v 851B–C). 'The basis of biblical criticism,' Professor James Barr writes, is 'essentially literary and linguistic, rather than historical, in character.

Its basic perceptions seem to derive from the Renaissance, with its renewed ability to read ancient texts as literature, to perceive literary genres and relate them to the details of language and thereby to find the path to interpretation. It is therefore more true to say that biblical criticism is a literary mode of operation, which carries with it historical consequences, than to say that it is a historical mode of operation, which carries with it literary consequences' (*Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism* [Oxford 1983] 105). This insight describes Erasmus' approach admirably, even though he is not named in Barr's book. In Scripture literal and spiritual senses coexist. All the spiritual senses are founded upon the literal and, as Thomas Aquinas wrote, nothing necessary to faith is contained under the spiritual sense which is not elsewhere expressed clearly in the literal sense (*Summa theologiae* I q 1 art 10). Erasmus does not quote the passage but agrees with the doctrine, which he enunciates in his own manner. He emphasizes the interplay of historical and spiritual senses. In his commentaries on the Psalms he illustrates this relationship by reference to Ps 144 (143 Vulg) on David and Goliath. Clearly this psalm has a historical meaning, yet that historical meaning is no hindrance to the Christian's perception of its allegorical or spiritual meaning. This psalm, like many others, has a *duplex argumentum*, historical and allegorical or anagogical; it relates deeds, foreshadows evangelical history, teaches true devotion, and pictures eternal blessedness (*Commentarius in psalmum secundum* LB v 201C–D). The interpreter of Scripture is well advised to keep to the literal sense as long as he can do so. But although allegory is based on the literal or grammatical sense (*De concordia* LB v 470C; *Ecclesiastes* LB v 1029C), the literal sense is often found to be insufficient or unsatisfactory. Then we may proceed with due caution to figurative and allegorical interpretations. Some parts of the Old Testament, especially in Genesis, are incredible or unedifying if understood literally – the deception of Jacob by giving him Leah instead of Rachel is but one of many examples – and are painfully like the fictions of the poets (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 1044B–C; *Enchiridion* LB v 29B–E / CWE 66 67–9). Thomas More thought the literal sense of some biblical passages so difficult that he did not see how anyone could grasp it (*Correspondence* 49:762–50:799 / *Selected Letters* 34–5). Erasmus tells us in one place to prefer interpreters who retreat as far as possible from the letter, for the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life. Origen, Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome are safe guides (*Enchiridion* LB v 8D / CWE 66 34–5). The careful, reverent interpreter of Scripture will always consider exactly what subject the writer is treating, what the occasion or circumstances are, and what the purpose of the passage or discourse is (*Hyperaspistes* II LB x 1348E, and see the entire section 1345A–1348E). As a Christian scholar Erasmus has the grammarian's sense for language and rhetoric, the moralist's for tropology, the theologian's for typology.

For Erasmus' principles and practices as editor, exegete, and commentator, see his *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI; his expositions of the Psalms LB v 171A–312B, 369A–468E, 507A–556E; and the *Paraphrasis in Novum Testamentum* LB VII. On problems and standards of contemporary exegesis see Henri de Lubac *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'Écriture* (Paris 1959–64, but he is not always reliable on Erasmus; on this point see Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 570 n250). Also CHB III; E.W. Kohls *Die Theologie des Erasmus* 2 vols (Basel 1966)

I 126–43; John B. Payne ‘Toward the Hermeneutics of Erasmus’ in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 13–49; G. Chantraine ‘Mystère’ et ‘philosophie du Christ’ selon Erasme (Namur 1971) 334–62; Albert Rabil Jr *Erasmus and the New Testament* (San Antonio 1972); J. Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 541–86; Jerry H. Bentley *Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton 1983); *Erasmus’ Annotations on the New Testament* I: *The Gospels*; facsimile of the final Latin text (1535) with all earlier variants ed Anne Reeve (London 1987); Erika Rummel *Erasmus’ ‘Annotations’ on the New Testament* (Toronto 1986).

No attempt has been made in this note to compare Erasmus’ practice with modern approaches to allegory and typology. For a brief account of these see the article on ‘Allegory and Typology’ in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* ed Alan Richardson and James Bowden (London 1983).

118 Quoted as a maxim in *De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 390D / ASD I-2 339:1n / CWE 25 88

119 Jeremiah 27–8

120 That the ‘hypocrite’ of the verse (Job 34:30) may be a tyrant was pointed out to Henry VIII by Erasmus in 1519 (Allen Ep 964:9–15 / CWE Ep 964:11–18). He reminded other princes and prelates also of Prov 21:1 (Allen Epp 1009:41–2, 1403:12–13 / CWE Epp 1009:52–3, 1403:14–15, Allen Epp 2034:24–5, 2134:242–3, 3049:130). Thomas More quotes it from the Tower in 1534–5 (*Correspondence* 509:25–32, 537:166–7, 542:85–6, 550:36–8 / *Selected Letters* 225, 233, 237, 244).

The medieval *Glossa ordinaria* takes Prov 21:1 as an illustration of divine sovereignty and in effect a reply to the Pelagians. On the *Glossa ordinaria* see CHB II chapters 5–6 (102–279). Erasmus uses the verse in *De libero arbitrio* (1524) to support his arguments for freedom of the will, because ‘turns’ is not the same as ‘forces’ (‘non statim cogit, qui inclinatur’ LB IX 1237B). In the same passage he adduces Job 34:30 to clarify the passage in Proverbs. Luther answered that although the turning in question was not a matter of compulsion, yet it was one of immutability – something man could not avoid or alter (*De servo arbitrio* [1525] WA 18 747:21–748:7 / LW 33 233). Erasmus replied to Luther in *Hyperaspistes* II (1527) LB X 1469D–E. Calvin held that Prov 21:1 applies to the entire human race, not only to kings (ICR 1.18.2, 2.4.7).

The question raised by this text in Proverbs of the nature and limits of political authority is one on which Erasmian convictions are expressed by Eusebius and Timothy. Erasmus made no striking or original contributions to political theory, but some of his writings on government and governors, war and peace, found many readers in many languages through their merits as eloquent presentations of such topics by a Christian moralist. His opinions are set forth not only in tractates (*Institutio principis christiani*, *Querela pacis*, *De bello Turcico*) but in some of the longer essays in *Adagia* (I iii 1: *Aut regem aut fatuum nasci oportere*, II viii 65: *Ut fici oculis incumbunt*, III iii 1: *Sileni Alcibiadis*, III vii 1: *Scarabeus aquilam quaerit*, IV i 1: *Dulce bellum inexpertis*), in *Moriae encomium*, *Julius exclusus*, and the *Colloquia* (see ‘A Fish Diet’ and ‘Charon’).

Eusebius’ conclusion, that no subject has authority to condemn his king, and the implied corollary that even a wicked and oppressive ruler must be obeyed, was common doctrine, often repeated in Erasmus’ time, for example by Luther

- in his treatise on the temporal authority, *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit* (1523) WA 11 245–80 / LW 45 81–129. Civil authority, Luther taught, is of divine origin, instituted to restrain or punish evildoers, but it has no power over faith or conscience, no power to rule the soul. Calvin agrees that God sometimes chastises men through the scourge of wicked rulers, a scourge that must be endured (1CR 4.20.29). Tyndale is uncompromising: ‘The king is, in this world, without law; and may at his lust do right or wrong, and shall give accounts but to God only.’ If rulers do wrong, God will punish them, but ‘they may not be resisted: do they never so evil, they must be reserved unto the wrath of God’ (*Obedience of a Christian Man* [1528] in *Works* 1 [Ps 42] 178, 332). These pronouncements were based on Rom 13:1–6.
- 121 Ps 51:4 (50:6 Vulg)
- 122 *oestro*, a gadfly, as in Plato *Republic* 9.577E; cf *Adagia* II viii 54.
- 123 The longest river in Greece. See Ovid *Metamorphoses* 8.547–61.
- 124 Proverbial. Cf Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 717–36; *Adagia* II iii 77. When advising Cromwell to tell Henry VIII what he ought to do but never what he was able to do, More added, ‘For if a lion knew his own strength, hard were it for any man to rule him’ (Roper *Life of More* 228).
- 125 *extrema ancora*; like *sacra ancora* (*Adagia* I i 24). That the last refuge from tyranny is prayer for divine aid was also a traditional Christian doctrine. See Thomas Aquinas *De regimine principum* 1.6; trans Gerald B. Phelan, rev ed (Toronto 1949) 28. And Tyndale: ‘If they [tyrannical kings] command to do evil, we must then disobey, and say, “We are otherwise commanded of God”; but not to rise against them’ (*Obedience of a Christian Man* in *Works* 1 [Ps 42] 332). This is also Calvin’s teaching (1CR 4.20.32): ‘We must obey God rather than men’ (Acts 5:29). On Erasmus’ and More’s interest in the literary history of tyranny and tyrannicide, exemplified by their translations of Lucian’s *Tyrannicida* and replies to it, see *St Thomas More: Translations of Lucian* ed Craig R. Thompson, Yale CWM 3 part 1 (1974) passim; on the background of the subject 149–52 there; for Erasmus’ texts LB I 267A–298C / ASD I-1 506–51 / CWE 29 71–123 (*Tyrannicida*).
- 126 Rom 14:3–4; 1 Cor 2:15
- 127 Cf Prov 8:29; Job 28:10–11; Prov 21:1.
- 128 What need . . . of the Holy Spirit?] Added in the March 1533 edition. Timothy’s interpretation in this paragraph displeased the faculty of theology at Paris, which took it to mean that the ‘perfect’ man need not observe ecclesiastical ordinances. Erasmus retorted that if Paul did not want Christians to be judged by meat and drink, why should the pronouncement of Solomon (the reputed author of Proverbs) cause surprise? The Holy Spirit is above human ordinances, above pope and synods (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* [1532] LB IX 934D–935B; cf *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* [1531] LB IX 1182D–E).
- 129 Timothy] Name omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 130 See n104 above. Timothy puns on *ova* ‘eggs’ and ‘ovation,’ as is done again at ‘The Poetic Feast’ 397:7.
- 131 Uninvited guest; see n13 above.

- 132 Mainly 1 Cor 7, then 1 Cor 6:12–13 and Rom 14. These arguments are elaborated in ‘A Fish Diet.’
- 133 *Adagia* II iv 93; equivalent to ‘going right to the point’ or ‘hitting the nail on the head’
- 134 Matthew 19:12. Here a joke. For Erasmus’ opinions on celibacy and virginity see ‘The Girl with No Interest in Marriage’ introduction 279–80 and n13.
- 135 1 Cor 6:13
- 136 *bellaria* (Gellius 13.11.6–7); common in Erasmus
- 137 The ‘catastrophe’; *Adagia* I ii 36
- 138 *Adagia* I x 78: *Muta persona*. The women present at ‘The Profane Feast’ are also silent; cf the introduction 132 and 149:9–10.
- 139 women] Until the June 1526 edition the text had ‘and children’ after ‘women.’
- 140 Plutarch *Moralia* 461D *De cohibenda ira*, which was translated by Erasmus LB IV 67C / ASD IV-2 282:455–60; cf *Apophthegmata* LB IV 163E, *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1035E, and ‘The Poetic Feast’ 404:23–4 below.
- 141 Terence *Adelphi* 43–4 for example, and see *Adagia* IV ii 35.
- 142 Cf Prov 18:22; 19:14. ‘If a bad wife is such a bitter thing, consider what a gift of God a good woman is’ (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 655B).
- 143 In ‘Marriage’ a wife says that if husbands are bad their wives are usually at fault (318:2–3). A story of how Thomas More ‘trained’ his wife is told there (314:24–315:36).
- 144 Greek in the original; a word borrowed from 2 Tim 3:16
- 145 Hos 6:6. For God, being Spirit, is pleased by spiritual sacrifices (*De concordia* LB V 486F)
- 146 Matt 9:10–13. ‘Levi’ in the next sentence is a slip. The publican is called Matthew in this Gospel, Levi in Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27; but, as Erasmus says, they are the same person (see his paraphrases on these texts LB VII 53E, 174E, 341B). On Jesus’ use of Hosea see LB VII 54C–E.
- 147 Matt 22:37–40
- 148 Mark 7:1–4
- 149 Matt 9:12–13. The Mosaic law foreshadowed Christ in ‘types’ and ceremonies but was abrogated by his coming. See Erasmus’ paraphrase on Romans 7 LB VII 797E–798C / CWE 42 40–5.
- 150 Origen and Augustine agree, Erasmus notes in *Ratio verae theologiae*, that comparison of obscure texts with other texts is the best method of seeking to understand them, and he paraphrases Augustine (*De doctrina christiana* 2.9.14, 3.28.39 PL 34 42, 80) to support this counsel (LB V 131B–132B). He warns, however, against taking passages out of context and disregarding the circumstances of composition or the writer’s evident intention (LB V 128A–C). For comparison can yield different results to different investigators. In More’s *Dialogue concerning Heresies* (1529) against Tyndale, the Messenger, professing Lutheran sympathies, affirms ‘that the best and surest interpretacyon’ is ‘to lay and conferre one texte with another,’ adding that he himself has no need of gloss or interpreter (Yale cwm 6 part 1 34:4–12). More considers this reliance on private judgment a dangerous eccentricity. Coverdale tells readers of his English-Latin New Testament (1538) ‘that in comparynge these two textes together, they maye the better understonde the one by the

other' (*Records of the English Bible: The Documents relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1526–1611* ed A.W. Pollard [London 1911] 208). Similarly injunctions of Edward VI (1547), renewed by Elizabeth I (1559), required every parson to own a New Testament in Latin and in English, 'with the Paraphrase upon the same of Erasmus, and diligently study the same, conferring the one with the other' (David Wilkins *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae* 4 vols [London 1737] IV 6a, 182b–183a, 184a).

151 Isa 1:11–17

152 Those required by the natural law; see Rom 2:14–15.

153 Col 2:16–17; Heb 10:1–10

154 *miserecordiam et eleemosynam*. The second term is the Latin form of ἐλεημοσύνη, from the verb ἐλεέω 'show mercy.'

155 The Paris theologians objected to this sentence, charging that it agreed with Luther's opinions (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 933C–D). It agrees with everybody's opinion, replied Erasmus – because it is true (934B–D). The next sentence, beginning 'Though not to be omitted entirely,' clearly distinguishes his position from Luther's, he implies. Examples of rites and ordinances in Mosaic law to which Theophilus alludes are recalled mainly from Leviticus and Deuteronomy and from apposite judgments in the Gospels: Matt 12:1–12, Mark 2:23–8, Luke 6:1–9, 14:3–6 on keeping the sabbath; Matt 5:21–4 on reconciliation with a brother; Luke 10:29–37 on charity to a neighbour. The Sermon on the Mount and the parables are the obvious sources of Theophilus' emphasis on contrasts between Law and gospel.

156 For speech reveals character. See Colet's dictum recorded in *Adagia* I x 74 LB II 389C–D. Erasmus was fond also of the saying attributed to Socrates, 'Speak, that I may see thee.' See CWE 23 xxvii n26.

157 Contrasts between the letter and the spirit of religious precepts, already met in 'The Profane Feast' (143:29–146:5), furnish some of Erasmus' favourite polemical and homiletic material. What he calls Judaism in this context is legalism, pharisaical rigorousness, or cold formalism ending in superstition. Much of what he writes on ceremonies (see 196:3–39 below) and Christian ethics repeats this theme of the crucial differences between letter and spirit, between 'Judaism' and Christian freedom, especially as freedom is expounded by Paul. Because the Jews attached so much importance to corporeal observances, Erasmus uses 'Judaism' as a label for those externals, for prescribed rules of dress, fasting, and the like, matters in which, he laments, Christians all too closely resemble the Jews. They too are excessively fastidious and formal in their observances of such ordinances while neglecting the demands of the spirit. So he wrote in 1532 (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 889D–E), but the description is applicable to all his pages where 'Judaism' is treated. See 'A Fish Diet' 683:21–687:8, 691:9–702:5.

Erasmus' *De esu carniū* (LB IX 1197–1214), a letter on fasting addressed to the bishop of Basel, was issued by Froben in August 1522, very near to the date of the first edition of the complete 'The Godly Feast' (July–August 1522), and has direct relevance to what is said in the colloquy on the Pauline conception of Christian liberty. *De esu carniū*, a proposal for reforms, including fewer restrictions on eating and more generous rules of fasting, was provoked by a

scandalous affair in Basel in April 1522. A prominent surgeon, one Sigismund Steinschnider, and some friends deliberately violated fasting regulations by eating pork on Palm Sunday, thus causing a controversy that lasted for several months. No contemporary reader familiar with the Steinschnider case, *De esu carniū*, and 'The Godly Feast' would have missed the connection between them. See Allen Ep 1353:177–87 / CWE Ep 1353:200–10 and n13. Steinschnider is reported by a chronicler to have uttered blasphemies at one time or another (Allen Ep 1274:14n). In February 1523 he was arrested in imperial territory and executed after what Erasmus describes, without exaggeration, as 'atrocious tortures.' Erasmus' brief but vivid account of these is contained in his *scholia* to *De esu carniū*, but the *scholia* were not written or printed until 1532 and were not included in his collected works. See 'In epistolam . . . de delectu ciborum . . . scholia' ed J. Coppens in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 599–620 and ed C. Augustijn in ASD IX-1 51–89; see also J. Coppens 'Les scolies d'Erasmus sur l'*Epistola de interdicto esu carniū*' in *Colloquia Erasmiāna Turonensia* II 829–36. For the passage on Steinschnider's death see *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 600–1 and ASD IX-1 65:17–66:30, translated in R.H. Bainton 'Erasmus and the Persecuted' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 202. See 'A Fish Diet' n263.

- 158 Interpretations of Prov 21:1–3 by Eusebius, Timothy, Sophronius, and Theophilus have illustrated both method and mood of a rewarding approach to Scripture: a rational dialogue controlled by the spirit of reverent inquiry. These readers of the sacred text interpret perceptively but partially, not with finality, just as they have viewed the varied riches of Eusebius' gardens (and will later see the wonders of his house), not taking in everything at once but seeing and comprehending better as they proceed. One point of view may illuminate or modify another. Eusebius' comment on Prov 21:1, while acceptable, deals with the passage in its own terms, so to speak. Timothy's, by taking 'king' metaphorically, enlarges the meaning and, to make this convincing, introduces Paul's emphasis on the conflict between the Law and spiritual freedom. Sophronius carries this Pauline doctrine further by applying it to the second verse. Thus the effort to comprehend Prov 21:1–2 carries the company from the Old to the New Testament as, according to traditional Christian exegesis, scrutiny of the Old Testament must do when accompanied by insight and authoritative precedent. This does not mean that everything without exception in the Old Testament is typological. Customs or regulations (such as those concerned with fasting or sabbaths) not pertaining to Christians should be regarded as allegories (*Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 86E–F). But in whatever pertains to Christ, the Old Testament prefigures the New, as Augustine wrote (see n117 above). Instead of merely seeing through a glass darkly or 'as through a lattice' (cf n61 above), Eusebius and his friends have gained new understanding of the depths of the biblical text. Then Theophilus, to explain Prov 21:3, resorts to Hos 6:6, which is effectually clarified by Christ's words in Matt 9:9–13. The guests have discovered that in their efforts to understand Scripture their best guide is Scripture itself. Nor does Erasmus forget that the collection of canonical texts comprising Scripture was the creation of the church. 'It was the church which persuaded me to believe in the gospel and it was from the same teacher that I learned to interpret the words of the gospel' (Allen Ep 1637:62–4 / CWE Ep 1637:67–9). This too is an echo of Augustine:

- 'Ego vero evangelio non crederem, nisi me catholicae ecclesiae commoveret auctoritas' (*Contra epistolam Manichaei* 1.5.6 PL 42 176).
- 159 Cf 'The New Mother' 596:38, 599:21–5, 600:8–9; also 194:1–4 and n205 below.
- 160 nay a Sybaritic] Luxurious. Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition. *Adagia* II ii 65; cf 'Additional formulae' n21.
- 161 Austere. The Carmelites were one of the stricter orders of friars.
- 162 *Adagia* III vi 34
- 163 *Adagia* I vii 17; Greek in the text
- 164 So *Adagia* II iii 18
- 165 Ancient testimony varies (see ASD I-3 248:530–1n). Erasmus relies here on Plutarch *Moralia* 353A–C *De Iside et Osiride*. He repeats the statement in *Lingua* LB IV 686F–687A / ASD IV-1A 76:618–20 / CWE 29 308.
- 166 which ... delights] These words are a marginal addition in the manuscript. Erasmus' first visit to England in 1499 came too late to allow him to hear Colet's impressive lectures on St Paul's Epistles; two lectures, on Romans and 1 Corinthians, are extant. By the autumn of 1501 Erasmus too was at work on Paul (Allen Ep 164:36–43 / CWE Ep 164:39–46) and in 1504 told Colet that he had written on Paul's letter to the Romans three years earlier and had finished four volumes (Allen Ep 181:31–6 / CWE Ep 181:36–41; apparently these did not survive), but then stopped to concentrate on Greek. In 1511 he spoke briefly of perhaps resuming this enterprise (Allen Ep 225:20, and see Ep 296:156–7 / CWE Ep 225:22, and see Ep 296:166–8). His eventual contributions are found mainly in his *Annotaciones in Novum Testamentum* (1516 and later) and his Paraphrase on the Epistles (1517–21), but there are many scattered comments of value in other writings, including the *Colloquies*. The influence of Pauline theology is pervasive in his conception of Christianity. See the appraisal of Paul in Ep 916 (February 1519). How much of his enthusiasm for Paul may have been due to Colet we do not know, but clearly for Erasmus, as for Gaspar in 'Youth,' Paul is the favourite apostle.
- 167 1 Cor 6:12
- 168 Cicero *De officiis* 3.11–15; Erasmus *Paraclesis* LB V 142A and VI *4
- 169 1 Cor 8:1–13, 10:27–33. See *Antibarbari* CWE 23 71:27–72:19; *De esu carniū* LB IX 1199A–B; and the paraphrases on these texts of 1 Corinthians LB VII 884F–887E, 894A–D.
- 170 1 Cor 10:23–5
- 171 1 Cor 6:13
- 172 1 Cor 10:32–3
- 173 Titus 1:15
- 174 The faculty of theology at Paris objected to these lines ('It was permissible, therefore ...') as calling fasting into question. For Erasmus' reply see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 935B–D.
- 175 1 Cor 6:1–10
- 176 1 Cor 6:13
- 177 1 Cor 6:9
- 178 Calvin, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians, interprets 'all things are lawful unto me' as Paul's assumption about what the Corinthians themselves might say, the sort of answer they would make when rebuked for their vices.
- 179 1 Cor 9:19. The Greek and Vulgate texts have 'gain more,' not 'gain all.'

- 180 *Ambrosiaster Commentarius in epistulas Paulinus . . . In epistulam primam ad Corinthios* ed Henry Joseph Vogels CSEL 81 part 2 64–5 (on 1 Cor 6:12); ‘false apostles’ is Ambrosiaster’s term. Cf Erasmus’ paraphrase on this verse LB VII 876f. For Ambrosiaster on 1 Cor 9:19 see CSEL 81 part 2 103.
- These commentaries on the Pauline Epistles were attributed in medieval centuries to Ambrose. Erasmus is sometimes credited with having been the first to question Ambrose’s authorship and with coining the name ‘Ambrosiaster.’ In his edition of Ambrose (1527) he says (in words quoted by Hoven, cited below) that the text had been contaminated by someone, especially in parts on Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians, but he does not reject the entire commentary as unauthentic. A Jesuit, Franciscus Turrianus (Torres) was inclined to do so in 1572. Apparently it was the editors of the Benedictine Ambrose (Paris 1686–90) who invented ‘Ambrosiaster’ to designate the unknown author (II Appendix cols 21–4; repr PL 17 [1845] 39–45). See R. Hoven ‘Saint Ambroise ou l’Ambrosiaster?’ *L’antiquité classique* 38 (1969) 172–4. Erasmus valued Ambrose highly but thought him somewhat extravagant in allegorical exegesis of Scripture: ‘sedulus magis quam felix’ (*Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 127D; *Enarratio in psalmum xxxviii* LB V 432E; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1038E–1040C). He had no such reservations about Ambrosiaster, who is notably restrained with respect to allegory. On Ambrosiaster see further A. Souter *A Study of Ambrosiaster* (Cambridge 1905) and *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* (Oxford 1927).
- 181 In his commentary on 1 Corinthians PG 124 633A–B. Theophylact, a Greek Orthodox archbishop in Bulgaria (eleventh century) was at one time identified by Erasmus simply as ‘Vulgarius’ and is so called on the title-page of the 1516 edition of the *Novum instrumentum*. Erasmus had evidently known his commentaries in a Latin translation published at Rome in 1477, in which they were mistakenly attributed to Athanasius. In Basel Erasmus found in 1514 two volumes of the original (Greek) text containing Theophylact’s commentaries on the Gospels and Paul’s letters. Some of these Erasmus used in the 1516 edition of the New Testament, more in later editions. By the time the 1519 edition was ready he knew the commentaries were neither by ‘Vulgarius’ nor by Athanasius. He had a high opinion of Theophylact as an exegete. In Allen Ep 916:402–8 / CWE Ep 916:451–6 he says Ambrose (Ambrosiaster) and Theophylact were his principal guides in his Paraphrase on Corinthians. On Erasmus and Theophylact consult also M.A. Screech *Ecstasy and ‘The Praise of Folly’* (London 1980) 145–51.
- 182 *sensus germanus*, the true, genuine meaning; cf *germanam scripturam* (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 704D). See Cave *The Cornucopian Text* (introduction 174 above) 88–91. The *sensus germanus* is of course what every reader of Scripture wants to know, but even if the meaning is misunderstood or only partially understood, salvation is not imperilled so long as the erroneous interpretation conforms to devoutness and truth. It may even be beneficial if it aids a moral life and agrees with other texts of Scripture (*In psalmum quartum concio* LB V 274D).
- The exposition of the passages in 1 Corinthians by Eulalius is a good example of a basic technique of Erasmian exegesis, the comparison of texts (cf n150 above). To account for apparent inconsistencies in 1 Corinthians 6, Eulalius has

had to examine the structure of the chapter and adduce other Pauline texts to clarify it. A general conclusion emerges: that Paul, and all sincere Christians, are free from bondage to customs and ceremonies not affecting salvation, yet as Christians have an obligation to avoid behaviour that might cause others to stumble. Things indifferent in themselves, *adiaphora*, may take on ethical significance according to the use made of them. Although the explication is fruitful, it is not complete; other discoveries are possible. Eulalius is not satisfied with his own or 'Ambrose's' or Theophylact's interpretations. His friends (and the readers) recognize that on some matters they are left with inferences or probabilities, not certainties. No one responds to Eulalius' invitation to 'get me out of my difficulties.' We must infer that there is no absolutely final, inclusive as well as conclusive reading of the text. True scholarship and reverent study answer many questions and dispose of many false answers, but other nuances and perhaps other layers of meaning, other possibilities, await discovery. Scripture, as Erasmus says elsewhere, is like a superb painting: the longer we look at it, the more we discover there; something new is always revealed (*Enarratio in psalmum xxxiii* LB V 394A; cf Allen Ep 1800:155-73). Like Prov 21:1-3, then, the verses in Paul's letters elicit a thoughtful scrutiny which, even though imperfect, is profitable. The analysis by Eulalius is praised by a modern Catholic scholar as 'un modèle d'explication exégétique' (Louis Bouyer *Autour d'Erasmus: études sur le christianisme des humanistes catholiques* [Paris 1955] 169). No fundamental difference exists between Eulalius' interpretation and Colet's in his Oxford lectures on 1 Corinthians (*Opera* II 45-6, 98-9 [English], 190-1, 230-1 [Latin]) but Colet does not centre attention on 6:12, nor does he make as much use of passages from other chapters in dealing with chapter 6. A new edition, *John Colet's Commentary on First Corinthians* ed and trans Bernard O'Kelly and Catherine A.L. Jarrott, with valuable supplementary material, was published in 1985 (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 21, Binghamton, NY). In March 1522, several months before the enlarged text of 'The Godly Feast' appeared, Zwingli preached in Zürich a sermon on Christian freedom and the choice of foods. It was printed in April as *Von Erkiesen und Freiheit der Speisen*. In this, the first of his Reformation tracts, he included Pauline texts and arguments for purposes similar to those of the speakers in the colloquy. Whether Zwingli's utterances and the news of the public disturbances in Zürich over fasting had anything to do with Erasmus' pages on 1 Corinthians is uncertain. He had held for a long time the views expressed here, but the events in Zürich, well known to him and to others in Basel, may have given added interest and relevance to these pages.

- 183 Indeed . . . well.] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript. 'Eulalius' implies a person who speaks agreeably and persuasively.
- 184 *torsit*, the same word Eulalius uses at 189:37
- 185 On the question of 'profane' literature cf *Enchiridion* LB V 7E-8A / CWE 66 33-4. It is a major theme in *Antibarbari*.
- 186 See *Enarratio in psalmum xxii* LB V 322C-E.
- 187 This sentence introduces a *locus classicus* in Renaissance literature: an avowal not merely of Erasmus' own enthusiasm for favourite classical authors and his abiding conviction of their artistic, ethical, and cultural value but of the common sentiment of educated men in his age. It culminates in an expression,

at once cautious and confident, of hope for the ultimate salvation of the virtuous ancients (194:32–6). The entire passage conveys the spirit of Renaissance literary humanism and its faith in the legacy of classical civilization. The language here may be more memorable than that of similar Erasmian passages on the same theme, but the point of view is the one met throughout his career from *Antibarbari* (drafted as early as 1487/8) to the final edition of *Adagia* (1536).

The thought here is similar to that in the preface of Erasmus' new edition of Cicero's *De officiis* in 1519 (Allen Ep 1013:41–55 / CWE Ep 1013:48–61) and the *Tusculan Disputations* in 1523 (Allen Ep 1390:50–117 / CWE Ep 1390:55–127).

On *De officiis* see 184:10–13 above. The tradition underlying such sentiments goes back to Justin Martyr *Apologia* 1.46, 2.13 (PG 6 397–400, 465–8) and *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 26 (PG 6 531–2); and Clement of Alexandria *Protrepticus* 6 and 7 (PG 8 171–86). The works named in these lines were favourites with Erasmus and his contemporaries. He advises a schoolboy (1527) to study mainly history and ethics, recommending for ethics these four works of Cicero and Plutarch's *Moralia* (Allen Ep 1798:6–10). Another favourite, Cicero's *De finibus*, praised in a later colloquy ('The Epicurean'), is omitted here. On Cicero and European cultural history consult Walter Rüegg *Cicero und der Humanismus* (Zürich 1946); G. Vallese 'Erasme et Cicéron: les lettres-préfaces au *De officiis* et aux *Tusculanes*'; and C. Béné 'Erasme et Cicéron' in *Colloquia Erasmi Turonensis* I 241–6, II 571–9. On these as on so many topics in literary and cultural history there is always something to be learned from E.R. Curtius' *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* trans Willard R. Trask (New York 1953); R.R. Bolgar *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge 1954); and J. Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique*.

- 188 A speaker in *Ciceronianus* says he has added Cicero's name to those of the apostles in his saints' calendar (LB I 975A / ASD I-2 609:17 / CWE 28 346). But *Ciceronianus* is a satire of pedants who idolize Cicero and ape his manner and diction. In this passage of the colloquy it is Cicero's ethical wisdom, imparted with true eloquence, that is admired. Eusebius' remarks here echo serious Erasmian judgments. Erasmus would also add the names of Colet and Jean Vitrier to the list of saints (Allen Ep 1211:628–30 / CWE Ep 1211:686–7).
- 189 *recentiores*, like 'latter-day.' The same word is used in a passage of *Antibarbari* deploring the bad style of 'modern' writers (LB X 1720B / ASD I-1 96:18–19 / CWE 23 74:16–17).
- 190 Here, as frequently in Erasmus' pages (in the *Colloquia* see for example 'The Epithalamium' 522:1–2, 'A Pilgrimage' 645:18–19, 'The Funeral' 768:28–9, 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1098:10–12), Duns Scotus, *doctor subtilis*, 'and others of his sort' are treated as obscurantist, disputatious theologians and philosophers, leading examples of a type of learned ignorance and of density in thought and expression that Erasmus professed to find impenetrable and repugnant. We cannot be certain of how extensive was his knowledge or understanding of complex Scotist teachings on the structure of thought, theories of formal distinction, concepts of *haecceitas*, or Scotist versus Thomist treatments of questions concerning divine omnipotence and human freedom. But in the present passage that is beside the point. We do know that his impatience with the technicalities of scholastic philosophy in general, and his contempt for the Scotist variety of it, was characteristic of his assumptions and his temperament. He simply rejected

what he deeply felt to be the mischievous pretensions of the schoolmen. His denigrating allusions to Scotists echoed, and were echoed in turn, by other critics and helped to perpetuate the name of Scotus as a symbol of sterile abstraction. The objection to Scotus and other such philosophers, in the view of Erasmus, was their intellectual arrogance. Their logic and metaphysics were too subtle. They indulged constantly in audacious attempts to define the undefinable, whereas that peace which is the sum of the Christian religion can scarcely be preserved unless we define as little as possible (Allen Ep 1334:213–19 / CWE Ep 1334:226–34). Their abstractions were therefore of little use for the conduct of life. Moreover, these academic doctors were always quarrelling among themselves. And they wrote in a jargon to which Erasmus and other fastidious stylists reacted in much the same fashion as their literary descendants might to the writings of some sociologists. We could defeat the Turks, declares Erasmus, if we let loose upon them the whole band of Scotists, Ockhamists, and other dialecticians; no foe could resist such ferocity (*Moriae encomium* LB IV 467C–468B / ASD IV-3 154:460–77 / CWE 27 129). But after defeat, what would the Turks think or feel if we tried to convert them to Christianity by offering them the inexplicable tangles of the schoolmen with their terms of ‘instances,’ ‘formalities,’ ‘quiddities,’ ‘relations,’ and the like (Allen Ep 858:78–97 / CWE Ep 858:85–106)? When Erasmus rejects as unsatisfying the ratiocinations of the philosophers, he is but voicing for himself and many of his generation a conviction held by Christians as ancient as Augustine, as eloquent as Bernard, as recent (comparatively speaking) as Gerson. Like Gerson, he regarded *periculosa curiositas* as the special temptation of scholars (Allen Ep 1334:173; and see the preface *pio lectori* to the Paraphrase on Matthew LB VII **3). See Gerson *Contra curiositatem studentium* in *Oeuvres* III 224–34 no 99; extracts are translated by Steven Ozment in *Jean Gerson: Selections Textus minores* 38 (Leiden 1969) 26–45. This is why he can assert for example that his jests in *Moriae encomium* have more reverence in them than do some of Scotus’ most subtle speculations (*Responsio adversus febricitantis cuiusdam libellum* LB X 1679D–E).

Of this distrust of excessive speculation and formal inquiry in theology we find many examples in Erasmus, as in More, Colet, and other reformers. It was characteristic of the *devotio moderna*, that remarkable revival of pietism and mysticism which originated in Erasmus’ Holland and which produced a great religious classic, the *Imitatio Christi* ascribed to Thomas a Kempis. The mature Erasmus shared many of the spiritual ideals of the *devotio*. He shared also the concern for education that marked the Brethren of the Common Life, the famous confraternity imbued with those ideals and zealous in fostering the Christian life. As a boy he attended their school in Deventer, though to what extent he may have been influenced intellectually by his contacts with them at that time is not clear. However, Erasmus’ reaction to the Scotists and other scholastics should not be dismissed as mere ‘anti-intellectualism.’ After all it came from one whose entire life was devoted to learning and scholarship. Rather it was the protest of a Christian moralist and man of letters who, intellectually and temperamentally, was unimpressed by the technicalities and pretensions of formal philosophy and hence resistant to them. What he chose to mean by ‘philosophy’ was not metaphysics but moral wisdom (Allen Ep 393:17–26 / CWE Ep 393:18–28, Allen Ep 2533:107–15). Accordingly he saw no

real inconsistency between scepticism concerning the pretensions of formal philosophy and his advocacy of the 'philosophy of Christ,' for the 'philosophy' of Christ was the divine message in the Gospels, not the logic or metaphysics of the schools. In academic theology, Erasmus asserts in one of his *obiter dicta*, Aristotle's authority almost exceeded Christ's (*Adagia* IV i 1 LB II 961A). 'What can Christ have in common with Aristotle?' (Allen Ep 337:413 / CWE Ep 337:435), a question imitating Jerome's 'Quid facit cum psalterio Horatius? cum evangeliiis Maro? cum apostolo Cicero?' (Ep 22.29).

Many Scotists, like Scotus himself, were Franciscans: a double difficulty for Erasmus, who had annoying quarrels with certain members of that order. He praises the Franciscan Vitrier (Ep 1211 contains a memoir of him). Worthy Franciscans appear in the colloquy 'The Well-to-do Beggars,' unworthy ones in 'The Sermon' and 'The Seraphic Funeral.' He knew Scotists who were not bad men, but on one occasion does permit himself to say 'I have never yet seen one whom in my opinion you could call a true and unblemished Christian' (Allen Ep 1211:531-4 / CWE Ep 1211:579-80). During his Paris years, in the very centre of academic theology, he had opportunity at first hand to test impressions of the rival groups, Thomists, Scotists, and their somewhat more recent and popular rivals, the Nominalists.

Erasmus' resistance to technical philosophy and philosophical theology as encountered in Paris and later in Louvain was uncompromising and did not change. For a good illustration, one of many, of what he meant by the jargon and the absurdities of the business see his long note on 'vain jangling' (1 Tim 1:6) in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 926D-928D (translation in Thompson 'Better Teachers than Scotus or Aquinas' [n112 above] 142-5). It is one of the ironies of intellectual history that in the sixteenth century the name of Duns Scotus was turned into the English 'dunce.' Two centuries later the title of Pope's incomparable satire of dullness, *The Dunciad*, completed the degradation of a name once synonymous in the world of learning with philosophical acumen.

Whatever his aversion to scholastic texts, methods, and vocabulary, we must recognize that Erasmus had experience of them. As a student he studied dialectic and in Paris read Scotus (Allen I 58:62-7; *Apologia ad Caranzam* [1522] LB IX 402D-E). In Ep 64 (1497) he gives an amusing account of his career as a Scotist; cf 'Additional *formulae*' n16. Nor, when writing in serious vein, did he ignore the scholastics. Late in his life his library still contained editions of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, Scotus' commentary on the *Sentences*, editions of Durandus, Gerson, the *Glossa ordinaria*, and several works of Thomas Aquinas, including his commentary on Paul (Husner 240 nos 154, 161-70). He thought Aquinas the best of the *recentiores* interpreters of Scripture (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 554E) but often dissents from him and is at pains to correct him. For Thomas, alas, knew very little if any Greek, a fatal handicap for a New Testament scholar (*Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 78E-F, *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 707E, 777E, 890D, 933C-D, *Apologia in dialogum Jacobi Latomi* LB IX 86E-F). Thomas was at any rate superior to Scotus. Colet dissented, ranking Thomas even lower than Scotus, to Erasmus' surprise (Allen Ep 1211:425-44 / CWE Ep 1211:462-83). On Erasmus and Thomas see J.-P. Massaut 'Erasme et saint Thomas' in *Colloquia Erasmi Turonensis* II 581-611. Lorenzo

Valla had praised the sanctity of Thomas but considered his learning less profound than that of the Greek and Latin Fathers (see Hannah H. Gray 'Valla's *Encomium of St. Thomas Aquinas* and the Humanist Conception of Christian Antiquity' in *Essays in History and Literature Presented . . . to Stanley Pargellis* ed Heinz Bluhm [Chicago 1965] 37–51. The text of Valla's encomium is in his *Opera omnia* ed Eugenio Garin, 2 vols [Turin 1962] II 346–52. Erasmus knew this work; *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 707E). Valla, too, deprecated the scholastics' preoccupation with dialectic and metaphysics and their barbarous style. With these judgments Erasmus agreed. He may have been influenced by Valla, and by his contacts with Colet and More, in this matter, but it was mainly his own temperament and experience that produced his lifelong impatience with Scotus and what Scotus represented. He did not need to be warned about the academic establishment in philosophy and theology, for he was never in danger of taking that too seriously.

Establishments often outlive their critics, however. The Sorbonne survived. Later in the century a reformed scholasticism found brilliant exponents in Spain. In England, on the other hand, texts of Thomas, Scotus, and Peter Lombard were banished from the theological curriculum by government decree in 1535, yet the old scholastic topics for disputation, and the custom of disputation itself, lasted for another century or longer. In Germany the Lutherans renounced scholasticism. As a professional theologian Luther was learned in scholastic teachings and texts, especially those of the Nominalists William of Ockham and Gabriel Biel, but after 1516 he abandoned them, attacking scholasticism and its whole Aristotelian apparatus. 'It is an error to say that "without Aristotle one does not become a theologian"'; on the contrary 'one does not become a theologian unless he does so without Aristotle.' 'All Aristotle is to theology as darkness is to light.' 'To assert that "a theologian who is not a logician is a monstrous heretic" is a monstrous and heretical statement.' So Luther *Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam* (1517) articles 43, 44, 50, 45 (WA I 224 / LW 31 12).

It is fair assumption that many readers have been amused by Erasmus' gibes at Scotus without having read a page of Scotus themselves. Nevertheless one leading specialist on Erasmus, Professor J.-C. Margolin, perceives significant areas of agreement on certain major themes – liberty, love, individuality – between Scotus and Erasmus. He concludes that Erasmus was 'un scotiste sans le savoir' and that his scornful treatment of Scotus was due simply to misunderstanding and to irrepressible wit and raillery. If this is so, it would have surprised Erasmus as well as others. In any event his ridicule of Scotus is too firmly fixed in literary history to be affected by philosophical analysis, however subtle. Margolin's essay, 'Duns Scotus et Erasme,' is in *Regnum Hominis et Regnum Dei, Acta Quarti congressus Scotistici Internationalis 1976* ed Camille Bérubé II *Sectio specialis: la tradizione scotista veneto-padovana* (Rome 1978) 89–112.

Adequate description with analysis of all the implications of Erasmus' allusion to Scotus 'and others of his sort' in 'The Godly Feast' would fill at least a volume. As for other contemporary critics, a mere beginning can be made by considering two important statements by friends of his, statements written only a few years before this colloquy was printed. One is More's letter to

Maarten van Dorp (1515) on the nature and functions of grammar and dialectics (text in *Correspondence* 24–74 / *Letters* 6–64 / Yale CWM 15 1–127); the other a spirited attack by Vives, *In pseudodialecticos* (1520) ed and trans Rita Guerlach (Dordrecht, Boston, and London 1979); there is a critical edition with translation by Charles Fantazzi (Leiden 1979). Of books in English on medieval philosophy, D.J.B. Hawkins *A Sketch of Medieval Philosophy* (London 1946), F.C. Copleston *A History of Philosophy* (Westminster, Md 1946–75) III, and David Knowles *The Evolution of Medieval Thought* (London 1962) are recommended. Etienne Gilson *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York 1940) is one of the best introductions. His *Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* trans A.H.C. Downes (New York 1940) is an admirably learned and judicious exposition. For logic, a subject that bored Erasmus, see Philotheus Boehner *Medieval Logic: An Outline of Its Development from 1250 to c. 1400* (Chicago 1952) and William and Martha Kneale *The Development of Logic* (Oxford 1964). Thomas Gilby *Barbara Celarent* (London 1949), a description of how scholastic logic and dialectic worked, is a rewarding book and surely the most readable one on its subject; even Erasmus would have been interested by it. On Renaissance philosophy, Paul O. Kristeller's numerous books are always helpful. The most pertinent for readers of this work are *Renaissance Thought* 2 vols (New York 1961, 1965; vol I is a revised and enlarged edition of *The Classics and Renaissance Thought*, 1955) and *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance* (Stanford 1964). Heiko A. Oberman *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge, Mass 1963; rev ed Grand Rapids, Mich 1967) and later studies concern theology and Reformation rather than philosophy, but for Erasmus and his contemporaries theology and philosophy were more closely related disciplines, more complementary than they are now, a fact that can sometimes make a world of difference to our comprehension of texts and ideas.

A. Renaudet *Pré-*Réforme* et humanisme* is an indispensable description of the intellectual milieu in the university Erasmus knew so well. Articles which, while focusing on specific topics, illumine larger aspects of the continuity and differences of medieval and Renaissance philosophy are Terrence Heath 'Logical Grammar, Grammatical Logic, and Humanism in Three German Universities' *Studies in the Renaissance* 18 (1971) 9–64; Lisa Jardine 'The Place of Dialectic Teaching in Sixteenth-Century Cambridge' *Studies in the Renaissance* 21 (1974) 31–62 and 'Lorenzo Valla and the Intellectual Origins of Humanist Dialectic' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 15 (1977) 143–64; James K. McConica 'Humanism and Aristotle in Tudor Oxford' *English Historical Review* 94 (1979) 291–317. John W. O'Malley 'The Feast of Thomas Aquinas in Renaissance Rome' *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 35 (1981) 1–27 is a useful addendum to the history of papal favouritism of the doctrines of Aquinas in Renaissance Rome.

191 So Erasmus writes about his reading of *De officiis* and the *Tusculan Disputations* (Allen Epp 1013:26–40, 1390:97–101 / CWE Epp 1013:33–47, 1390:107–10).

192 Like other writers Erasmus sometimes varied Cicero's family name with his personal and generic names, Marcus Tullius. English writers from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries often wrote 'Tully.'

193 Greek in the original; *Adagia* I ii 55

194 The quotation that follows is from Cicero *De senectute* 23.83–4. Erasmus' Latin text has several variants from that of modern editions. In 1517 Adrianus

Cornelii Barlandus asked Erasmus to write a commentary on Cato's discourse on immortality of the soul in this dialogue, for the benefit of the youthful cardinal-archbishop Guillaume (II) de Croy (Ep 647), but Erasmus did not oblige.

- 195 Cf *De praeparatione ad mortem* (1534) LB V 1922D–E.
- 196 *aut satietatem aut molestiam*. Most editions of the *Colloquies*, including that of March 1533, the *Opera omnia* of 1540, and LB, have *molestiam*, but *modestiam* is preferred by R. Hoven; see 'Modum, Modestiam ou Molestiam dans un passage de Cicéron' *L'antiquité classique* 38 (1969) 172. The Copenhagen manuscript (308 verso) and the earliest printed edition (Froben, July–August 1522 at sig l6 verso) have *modestiam*. Modern editions of *De senectute* 23.84 read *modum*. Hoven reports that an edition of Cicero by Josse Bade (Lyon 1507) has *modestiam* instead of *modum* and that a text in an edition by Erasmus (Cologne 1509) has *molestiam*, which is changed to *modestiam* in at least one later edition (Basel: Bebel 1523 or 1524); most have *molestiam*.
- 197 Cf *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1295B–C.
- 198 Marcus Porcius Cato, the Censor (234–149BC), who in Cicero's dialogue is in his eighty-fourth year. The other speakers are Publius Africanus Minor (see 'Copiousness' n17) and Gaius Laelius (the main speaker in *De amicitia*).
- 199 As Cicero readily conceded, but he defended his procedure – so heartily approved by Erasmus – as appropriate to Cato's character, not to his books. Give the credit to Cato's study of Greek literature in his old age (*De senectute* 1.1–3).
- 200 Appropriateness, propriety in dress, deportment, and language. The best classical description is Cicero's in *De officiis* 1.93–101, a chapter Lord Chesterfield advised his son to learn by heart, since 'it contains whatever is necessary for the dignity of manners' (*Letters*, 10 August 1749 OS). On decorum in discourse see Quintilian 11.1. By stressing power and freedom of imagination (guided by decorum), Chrysoglossus' passage on Cato enunciates a fundamental Erasmian conviction about literary art and his own literary practices, particularly in the *Colloquies*.
- 201 Cato died in 149BC. Cicero's *De senectute* was finished in 44BC.
- 202 Theodidactus] The editions do not agree on whether these lines are to be assigned to Theodidactus or to Theophilus. Theodidactus must be intended, because Eusebius indicated earlier (184:28) that each of his guests would have a chance to speak, and the present passage is Theodidactus' sole opportunity except for a dozen words at 204:28–9.
- 203 Virgil *Aeneid* 6.703–51; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 7.149–55, 11.592–604; and many others
- 204 *per fas nefasque*; Livy 6.14.10; Horace *Epodes* 5.87. See 'Youth' n33.
- 205 *praesidium*; see Cato in *De senectute* 20.73. The same word is used of the imprisoned soul in *Puerpera* 'The New Mother' (600:10) and *Apophthegmata* LB IV 113D. Prison and garrison are not identical, but the idea is clear: one must not leave his assigned place until released by authority.
- 206 A paraphrase rather than quotation of Plato *Phaedo* 62B. Erasmus may have Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 1.30.74 in mind also. The meaning of Plato's passage is disputed by modern scholars; see ASD 1-3 253:679n. Erasmus' copy of the Aldine Plato is in the Royal Library at The Hague.

- 207 *militiam*; see Job 7:1 (Vulg); 1 Tim 1:18; 2 Tim 2:4. On the early history of the figure see A. Harnack *Militia Christi* (Tübingen 1905).
- 208 *certamen*; 1 Tim 6:12; 2 Tim 4:7; 2 Cor 10:4
- 209 2 Cor 5:1–2
- 210 2 Cor 5:4. Erasmus makes the same point in his note on this word (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 766D–E).
- 211 2 Pet 1:13–14
- 212 Matt 24:42–6; Mark 13:33–7
- 213 Phil 1:23; cf 192:41–193:1 above.
- 214 The words are addressed to Simmias and Cebes, although presumably Crito is present; *Phaedo* 69D. In some respects, Erasmus suggests, the life of Socrates may even bear comparison with that of Christ (*Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 92B).
- 215 And so ... pray for us!'] This famous exclamation was evidently an afterthought, for the sentence is a marginal addition on 310 recto in the Copenhagen manuscript (Reedijk 'Three Erasmus Autographs' [introduction 171 above] 346). It was first printed in the July–August 1522 edition. 'Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis' is sometimes quoted as a palmary if quaint instance of the veneration of noble ancients by Renaissance humanists. Such inference is not altogether mistaken, but 'Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis' is not so simple as it seems. The speaker's presuppositions and purposes as well as the context must be taken into account if we are to understand the sentence satisfactorily and reconcile it with related passages by Erasmus.
- Just as a reader is expected to notice and remember the word 'perhaps' introducing Eusebius' remark that 'perhaps the spirit of Christ is more widespread than we understand' (192:14–16 above), so is he expected to pay due attention to 'I can hardly help exclaiming' in the sentence about Socrates. Both sentences are typically Erasman because, although they have the ring of conviction, they are nevertheless offered with an air of modesty and diffidence consonant with good manners and a desire to avoid unnecessary arguments. That they are not spoken by Erasmus *in propria persona* matters little, for by the time a reader reaches this page of the colloquy he is satisfied that Eusebius, Nephalius, Chrysoglotus, and the others are in general agreement on the subjects under discussion; they are Erasman in outlook and spirit. In this context, as Louis Bouyer remarks, there is nothing in the sentiments expressed that need disturb a theologian (*Autour d'Erasme* [n182 above] 175).
- Although *sancte* 'saint' is a key word, it has a certain ambiguity. Erasmus uses *sanctus* and *sanctimonia* with reference to Cicero (Allen Epp 1013:44, 49, 1390:70, 109), Seneca (Allen Ep 325:97), and, as late as 1531, Socrates (Allen Ep 2431:290). He writes that Socrates was 'philosophorum sanctissimum inculpatissimumque' (*De taedio lesu* LB V 1274E) and offers 'sanctior Socrate' as a comparison in *De copia* LB I 35F. *Sanctimonia* means 'morality,' 'goodness,' 'purity' in classical Latin, but in ecclesiastical Latin, when used by Christians in a Christian context and addressed to Christians, its normal meaning is 'holiness.' Erasmus' usual prefix for 'saint' is *divus*, as in his very frequent *divus Hieronymus*, but *sanctus* occurs sometimes, both in singular and plural (Allen Ep 843:278, 406). In *Modus orandi Deum* he comments on the ancient, especially Pauline, custom of calling all Christians 'saints' (*sancti*) and the modern habit of using *sanctus* and *divus*

interchangeably: 'We now call *sancti* only those whose memory the church reverently cherishes and who by papal authority are elevated to the ranks of *divi*' (LB V 1021F–1022A). Custom makes the titles synonymous in fact if not officially (as Erasmus hopes will happen in the case of Johann Reuchlin; see 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin' 250:22–251:39). Erasmus uses both terms: *veneratio sanctorum* . . . *superstitiosum aut preposterum divorum cultum* (Allen Ep 2443:200, 203); *sanctorum reliquias* (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 987D); and see the whole passage in *Modus orandi Deum* LB V 1116A–1121B on invocation of the saints and the use of images: *invocatio sanctorum* . . . *intercessionem sanctorum* . . . *divorum cultus* . . . *peterent idem a sancto Jodoco, aut alio quovis divorum*, among other examples. Here, the use of the vocative followed by *ora pro nobis* unmistakably associates the interjection with the Litany of the Saints in their intercessory role.

Objection has been made to turning 'sancte' in 'sancte Socrates' into 'saint' because Erasmus fails to use *divus* when invoking Socrates (Georg Gebhardt *Die Stellung des Erasmus von Rotterdam zur Römischen Kirche* [Marburg 1966] 204–15; see R.H. Bainton's review in *ARG* 59 [1968] 249–50). But the citations above, to which others could be added, show that *sanctus* too means 'saint' in some Erasmian texts. *Divus* was once reserved for those officially recognized by the church as saints. *Sanctus*, as the evidence in Erasmus' writings shows, could be used not only of Christian 'saints' but, in certain contexts and for exceptional reasons, even of virtuous pre-Christian pagans. Less technical than *divus*, it is acceptable here in the colloquy when Nephalius, carried away by admiration for the virtue of Socrates, can 'hardly help' invoking him as 'St Socrates.' The obvious warmth and sincerity of Nephalius' sentiments and those of his friends concerning Cato and Cicero must have struck Erasmus' contemporaries more forcibly than they do readers today, because some – probably many – of his readers would have perceived at once an implied but unasked question: *could* Socrates have been saved? Could any pagan, however virtuous? Whether Christian teaching or tradition had made any pronouncements on such a subject receives no mention here; the artistic and ethical purposes of the scene are served by Nephalius' utterance. The essential but unstated question touching the possible salvation of righteous pagans does receive very brief treatment in an entirely different context in another colloquy. See 'Faith,' particularly n108 on the old and tortuous question of *nulla salus extra ecclesiam* and its resolution. The question was settled by the conciliar decree of 1964 quoted there. Erasmus' intimations of immortality for Socrates and Cicero, and the opinions of others on such questions, are considered at length in my edition of *Inquisitio de fide* (2nd ed, with supplementary bibliography) 101–21.

A reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* (4 April 1970 page 483) wrote that 'Marsilio Ficino had come very near to affirming the sanctity of Socrates in a famous letter from which Erasmus took the reference to "Saint Socrates" in the 1522 *Convivium religiosum*.' But Erasmus did not find a reference to 'St Socrates' in that letter, which does not contain *sancte*, *sanctus*, or *sanctitas* (*Epistolae* book 8; Ficino *Opera omnia* 2 vols [Turin 1962, photographic repr of the Basel 1576 edition] 1 part 2 868). To be sure, he may have read the letter, but he could not have borrowed from it this famous phrase, which is his own and, as noted above, was a marginal addition in his manuscript. (The letter in question defends Socrates from the depreciation of the satirist Lucian, who in

Mors Peregrini 13 has a scornful reference to Christ, 'that crucified sophist,' and in the spurious *Philopatris* 12–13 some ironic allusions to biblical passages.)

This is not to underestimate the fervour of Ficino's panegyrics of the noble ancients, above all Socrates, Plato, and the Platonists, convinced as he was that 'Philebus, Theaetetus, Phaedo, Phaedrus, Socrates teach that our blessedness is *in sola Dei ipsius similitudine atque frutione*.' Plato, according to Numerius the Pythagorean, was another Moses, only speaking Greek (Ficino *ibidem* 866).

The *Times*' reviewer's claim for the indebtedness of Erasmus to Ficino's letter is restated more cautiously in a later publication as 'implying but not clearly affirming the sanctity of Socrates'; see A.H.T. Levi *Pagan Virtue and the Humanism of the Northern Renaissance* Society for Renaissance Studies, Occasional Papers 2 (London 1974) 16, 17. This is a valuable essay.

- 216 As for me . . . sanctified.] These lines are omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript but added in the July–August 1522 edition. Such optimism about the souls of Virgil and Horace was too much for Leclerc, the editor of LB; see his note on LB I 683E.

- 217 The bitter dying of one such Christian is described in the first part of 'The Funeral.'

- 218 Including certain friars and monks, as in 'The Funeral'

- 219 Erasmus does not oppose ceremonies as such but deplores dissension over them and unreasonable reliance on them (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 125D). Luther makes a similar assertion in his *Tractatus de libertate christiana* (1520) WA 7 69:24–73:15 / LW 31 372–6. Erasmus explains in the *Scholia* to *De esu carniū* (n157 above): 'By ceremonies I mean outward observances, rather like the Judaic ones but not therefore simply to be rejected. To some persons I seem to condemn ceremonies. In the first place I do not speak of all ceremonies, nor do I simply condemn those I do speak of, but I point to the danger therefrom. This is threefold: first, lest excessive rules crush the energy of the evangelical spirit; second, lest we become pharisaical by trust in them and smugness about our piety; finally, lest by reason of them we disdain a brother when we ourselves are liable to graver faults' (*Scrinium Erasmianum* II 618).

- 220 Literally 'stem and stern'; *Adagia* I i 8: *Prora et puppis*. The phrase is also used with reference to abuse of ceremonies in *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 889F.

Sometimes Erasmus uses 'ceremonies' and 'rites' in an inclusive sense, and at other times he distinguishes between ceremonies and sacraments; so we find *ceremoniis* in line 12 of this paragraph, *ritus* in line 13, *sacramentum* in line 24, *ceremoniae* in line 30. All of the church's seven sacraments are named: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, matrimony (see *Explanatio symboli* [1533] LB V 1175F–1176A / ASD V-1 284:304–29). These were the sacraments believed to have been instituted by Christ and were formally defined as such by the Council of Trent in 1547 (session 7 [1547] First decree [On the sacraments], canon 1; Tanner II 684). Erasmus had occasion to remind critics of earlier uncertainty about the number. He himself preferred to call matrimony a 'mystery' rather than a 'sacrament' when translating Eph 5:32 and Col 1:26, although not denying that marriage is indeed a sacrament (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 855B–E, 887D). He pointed out, however, that Jerome and Augustine did not consider it

a sacrament. The question was settled by the Council of Florence in 1439 (Denzinger-Schönmetzer *Enchiridion* 336–7 no 1327) and reaffirmed by Trent in 1563 (session 24 [Teaching on the sacrament of marriage] and canon 1; Tanner II 753–4). For an extensive critique of Erasmus' interpretation of this sacrament see Telle *Erasme et le septième sacrement*.

No precepts pertaining to ceremonies are found in the New Testament; none there about fasting or dress. Charity alone is commanded (*Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 106E–F). When criticized for these statements, and for including baptism and other sacraments among ceremonies in this colloquy, Erasmus replied that, generally speaking, whatever in religious observances is done outwardly and visibly (*sensibiliter*) by prescribed rites can be called ceremonies. Accordingly there is nothing to hinder us from calling the sacraments of the church ceremonies, since they are visible signs (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1076B). A sacrament, then, is a kind of ceremony; yet not all ceremonies or pious customs are sacraments. That women should cover their heads and keep silence at divine service, as Paul enjoins (1 Cor 11:1–15; 1 Tim 2:11–12), must be distinguished from ceremonies that always contribute to devotion (*ibidem* LB IX 1076C). The former may be merely temporary or local matters, not binding today; women sing in church nowadays and in some places in Italy do not cover their heads in church. Even the latter kind of ceremonies are too often performed mechanically and are external observances only instead of expressions of spirituality, of the charity 'that makes us truly devout and is found in the hearts, not in external things' (*ibidem* LB IX 1076C–D; see the entire passage LB IX 1076B–1077B).

Erasmus' concern about misunderstanding or abuse of ceremonies appears as early as *Enchiridion* (1503) LB V 33A–39A / CWE 66 74–84, as late as *Ecclesiastes* (1535) LB V 912D–E, 941F–942A, 1076A–1077A. Much of what is said here in 'The Godly Feast' on the subject is closely connected with the pages on legalism and 'Judaism' in 'A Fish Diet.' For reformers, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, the theme was almost obligatory.

On sacraments see further John Payne *Erasmus: His Theology of the Sacraments* (Richmond, Va 1970).

- 221 Infant baptism had been the universal Christian custom, but in Erasmus' lifetime the Anabaptists rejected it; see *De concordia* LB V 505B–D. Writing in 1533 to or about those who had difficulty coping with the pressures of radicals – whether Anabaptists or others is not clear – he advises that the church's customs be kept but adds that he thinks a parent should have the right to decide whether his child is to be baptized in infancy or in adolescence (Allen Ep 2853:38–42). Also he had written in 1522 that he saw nothing wrong, and much that was right, in rebaptism at the age of puberty. Infant baptism is valid and baptism is necessary, but its meaning would be more impressive and more deeply understood by the recipient if renewed later (preface to the Paraphrase on Matthew LB VII **3 verso).
- 222 Part of the ceremony, including the salting and exorcism, was performed at the church door; the main part inside.
- 223 Of the devil and his powers. Cf the colloquy 'Exorcism.'
- 224 The questions are answered on behalf of the infant by his sponsors or godparents.

- 225 By the sponsors, for the infant. 'What is baptism unless the abjuring of Satan?' (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 680f; cf *Ecclesiastes* LB v 902D).
- 226 Salt, placed on the candidate's tongue, is a symbol of purity, nutriment, and wisdom. Erasmus remarks that in ancient traditions about salt, 'even the theologian may find something suitable to his own use' (*Adagia* I i 12 LB II 32D).
- 227 *tingitur*. Cf 'A Fish Diet' 685:11–13 and 'The Seraphic Funeral' 1004:21–2. Immersion was still practised in Erasmus' day but affusion (infusion), the pouring of water on the child's head, was more common. Commenting on the variety of usages in ceremonies, Erasmus observes that in some places the child is immersed; in others the priest pours (*infundat*) water on the infant's head; in still other places he sprinkles (*inspergit*) a few drops of water on the head (*Supputatio* LB IX 560B). 'Behold how narrowly the people look on the ceremony. If aught be left out, or if the child be not altogether dipt in the water, or if, because the child is sick, the priest dare not plunge him into the water, but pour water on his head, How tremble they! how quake they! "How say ye, sir John (say they,) is this child christened enough? Hath it his full christendom?"' (Tyndale *Obedience of a Christian Man* [1528] in *Works* I [Ps 42] 277). 'Sir John' is the priest; a common appellation in English.
- 228 'Baptism is not granted – that is, you are not allowed to become a Christian – unless you pay'; and 'stole fees' are expected for every rite the church grants, even burial – a continual complaint of reformers for centuries. The more you pay, the bigger and better place you have, and if you pay enough you may even be buried near the high altar (*Adagia* I ix 12 LB II 338C–F), as George is in 'The Funeral' (772:39–40).
- 229 By baptism he becomes a member of the visible church. Should he die in infancy, he has nevertheless received a rite needed *ad salutem* (though see 'A Fish Diet' 685:13–15 and n62). But even after reception of baptism and other sacraments one becomes truly Christian only by attaining 'newness of life,' spiritual regeneration (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1061A–1062A). *Ecclesiastes* has a copious catalogue of *loci* (commonplaces) describing baptism (LB v 933C–934C). On baptism see further 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' nn27, 57.
- 230 At confirmation, after he is at least seven years old, though in some places ten or twelve was the age (*Supputatio* LB IX 560B).
- 231 See 'Youth' 96:31–97:35 with the notes.
- 232 Anciently given in some regions even to baptized infants (so Erasmus notes in *Ecclesiastes* LB v 830f; *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1066B), as it still is today in the Eastern Orthodox Church.
- 233 Either this means if he takes holy orders instead of marrying or if he takes them after the death of his wife (many examples in Allen; see Epp 961 and 2614 introductions, 1038:3n, 1479:28n, 2038:34n).
- 234 *per fas nefasque*; see n204 above.
- 235 Anointing with holy oil a sick person thought to be in danger of death. 'Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord' (James 5:14). Tyndale and More quarrelled over Tyndale's assertion that 'oiling' is 'no part of their priesthood' but merely 'a ceremony borrowed of the Jews' (*Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* in *Works* III [Ps 44] 19, 20).

- 236 For a satirical elaboration of this kind of deathbed scene see the first part of 'The Funeral.'
- 237 *Attica bellaria*; *Adagia* II iii 100 (cf n136 above).
- 238 *cornucopiae*; *Adagia* I vi 2
- 239 Sts Paul of Thebes, Hilarion, and Antony were desert hermits (third and fourth centuries) famed for their austerity. Paul of Thebes was the oldest of the three. Erasmus knew of him through Jerome's biography (PL 23 [1845] 17–28). Erasmus edited Jerome's lives of Paul and Hilarion in the first volume of the Froben Jerome (Basel 1516). On *sancta rusticitas* see the revised edition (Basel 1524–6) II 54 and *Ecclesiastes* LB V 787A. On Antony see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n43.
- 240 Acts 9:43, 10:6. Peter's sojourn with a tanner prompts a typical comment on the contrast between apostolic poverty and the wealth of the modern church (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 473D).
- 241 Acts 18:3. Cf *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1129A.
- 242 Phil 4:12; for the rest of the paragraph, 2 Cor 8–9. On the nature and duty of Christian charity see also *Enchiridion* LB V 35F–36A, 49E–F / CWE 66 79, 102; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1082B–1083A.
- 243 Matt 5:42
- 244 This same objection, and many others, are made and answered in *De vidua christiana* (1529) LB V 752D–753A / CWE 66 233–4. See also 'Beggar Talk.'
- 245 Luxurious; see 'The Profane Feast' n18.
- 246 1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16
- 247 *peccato capitali*. This opinion drew protest from the Paris faculty of theology (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 936C–E), which accused Erasmus of saying that it was a mortal sin to adorn churches and monasteries, and from Alberto Pio, against whom Erasmus defended himself vigorously (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1157A–1159B). He retorts to the Parisians and to Alberto Pio that they did not quote him exactly. He did not say 'mortal sin' but 'capital crime.' That is a quibble, but he is right in saying that his adversaries omit the important qualification adorn 'at excessive cost, when meanwhile so many of Christ's living temples are in danger of starvation, shiver in their nakedness, and are tormented by want of the necessities of life.' His most trenchant criticism of the lavishness and wealth of churches is reserved for the shrines of Mary at Walsingham and Becket at Canterbury. See 'A Pilgrimage.' In a letter to an English bishop, John Longland (1528), he tells of a man in Paris who narrowly escaped burning when he offended certain friars by saying money would be better spent by relieving the destitute than by adorning a monastery (Allen Ep 2037:219–29).
- 248 A prediction that proved to be correct. When the English government dissolved the monasteries in 1536–40 the treasures of Walsingham and Canterbury were confiscated.
- 249 *apud Insubres* in the text. The Insubrians were the ancient (Gallic) inhabitants of the region north of the Po. Pavia lies south of Milan.
- 250 The magnificent Certosa di Pavia. Erasmus visited this Carthusian abbey in 1506 (probably September), early in his residence of nearly three years in Italy.
- 251 The Certosa was founded by Giangaleazzo Visconti, duke of Milan, in 1396, but the building of it was not completed until the sixteenth century.

The financial support to which Erasmus refers came from the founder, the later Visconti, and their successors the Sforza. On ducats see CWE 1 314, 342–3. Whatever 3,000 ducats annually would be worth now, Erasmus was clearly impressed but not pleased by such lavish expenditure. The Italian canonist Antonio de Beatis says the duke endowed the monastery for 7,000 ducats but that more money came from his estates and the monastery's income was, in 1527, over 16,000 ducats. See de Beatis *Travel Journal* 183. De Beatis accompanied Cardinal Luigi of Aragon on a journey through Germany, Switzerland, the Low Countries, France, and Italy and kept a careful diary of what he saw and heard. He is especially interested in churches, but furnishes important information and impressions of many buildings, places, and persons. The Certosa he thinks 'the finest, loveliest and most splendid church we have seen anywhere in our journey' (*ibidem*). Hale's long introduction is a valuable account of Renaissance travel and travel journals.

- 252 A complaint made by other reformers also but without effect. Erasmus' contemporary, Giles of Viterbo, who was prior-general of the Augustinian friars 1508–18, denounced moral evils in Rome and urged reforms, but he praised Julius II's patronage of the arts and particularly the building of churches by Julius and Leo X; see John W. O'Malley 'Giles of Viterbo: A Reformer's Thoughts on Renaissance Rome' *Renaissance Quarterly* 20 (1967) 1–11.

'Like most northern humanists Erasmus was primarily interested in the written word and only secondarily in the world accessible to the eye' (Erwin Panofsky 'Erasmus and the Visual Arts' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 32 [1969] 204, an excellent study, and see his earlier article "'Nebulae in Pariete": Notes on Erasmus' Eulogy on Dürer' in the same journal 14 [1951] 34–41). Erasmus admired Dürer's genius, but his response to art was consistently that of a moralist. He has very little to say of buildings, paintings, or sculpture seen in Italy. When, later, he does recall them, it is for the purpose of a moral or religious observation, as in his comment on the Certosa di Pavia. He could not help being impressed by the grandeur of Canterbury Cathedral, but could not approve of much he saw and heard there (see 'A Pilgrimage' 641:19–647:21). On Erasmus and art see, besides the two articles by Panofsky, Rachel Giese 'Erasmus and the Fine Arts' *Journal of Modern History* 7 (1935) 257–79.

- 253 And . . . altars.] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the August 1523 edition. In 'The Funeral' the general's body is to rest 'at the right of the high altar in a marble tomb' (see n228 above). In Germany c 1500 altars were often named for the donors instead of for saints (Bernd Moeller 'Piety in Germany around 1500' trans Joyce Irwin in *The Reformation in Medieval Perspective* ed Steven Ozment (Chicago 1971) 53).
- 254 And coats of arms, swords, standards, helmets, symbolic birds and beasts (*Modus orandi Deum* LB V 1121A–B). Cf 'The Funeral' 772:40–773:6.
- 255 Matt 6:1–4
- 256 *imputari*, a technical term in Christian theology, with no wholly satisfactory English equivalent. Imputation, a doctrine closely associated with Lutheran theology, is the attribution or vicarious transfer to us of the righteousness which is actually and exclusively Christ's. God is our 'debtor' not because of

- any merits in us but because of what he freely promised. 'Bonum factum Deum habet debitorem' (Tertullian *De paenitentia* 2.11 CSEL 76 144). See *De concordia* LB v 496F–497A and the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14–30).
- 257 See 'Beggar Talk,' where the advice in the next few lines is repeated.
- 258 *errones*, here signifying mendicant friars as well as the beggars described in 'Beggar Talk,' who are not members of religious orders
- 259 *ad unguem*; *Adagia* I v 91
- 260 In writings of this date *codex* could mean either manuscript or printed book (see 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n18), but because Eusebius calls this codex his 'most splendid possession,' it is probably a manuscript.
- 261 Colet's custom was to introduce a new topic for discussion near the end of the meal and thus dismiss his guests, as Eusebius does, refreshed in mind and body, and better when they depart than when they arrived (Allen Ep 1211:319–22 / CWE Ep 1211:350–3).
- 262 Eusebius may have forgotten that the boy stopped reading at Prov 21:3 (184:7 above). This reading is Matt 6:24–5.
- 263 After this word some of the ancient manuscripts, as Jerome notes without comment (PL 26 46B), have 'or what ye shall drink.' These words are omitted in the Vulgate text. They are in Erasmus' Greek and Latin texts, though he thought them superfluous (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 38D–E), and were kept in Tyndale's and subsequent English (Protestant) translations.
- 264 In the manner of an ancient geometer who draws a figure in the sand (cf 201:26–7). Eusebius treats 'either he will hate the one . . . despise the other' as an example of chiasmus, a rhetorical figure in which the order of words is inverted when they are repeated (for another example see *De ratione studii* CWE 24 677:28–678:3). Theophilus will resolve Eusebius' difficulty. Compare Erasmus' explanation in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 37F–38C.
- 265 To make the contrasts more emphatic Erasmus prefers 'this one' and 'this other' (ibidem LB VI 37F–38C).
- 266 As it is in the Greek and Vulgate texts
- 267 *sophisma*, synonymous with *captio*, a deceptive question or fallacious statement (Gellius 18.13.2)
- 268 [Theophilus] This paragraph and the lines 'In this . . . exclude A' are assigned to Timothy in the manuscript and early editions, but are more appropriate to Theophilus, as in the September 1529 and later editions. Timothy seems baffled by the question asked by Eusebius; Theophilus comes to the rescue.
- 269 Matt 6:34
- 270 1 Cor 4:12
- 271 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:8
- 272 1 Thess 4:11–12; 2 Thess 3:10–12
- 273 The solution offered in this paragraph recalls the comment on 1 Cor 9:19 (191:4–22 above). The second solution offered, that Christ forbids not labour but anxiety, is clearly supported by Erasmus' paraphrase on this passage in LB VII 41E–42A; see also his paraphrase on Mark 6:8–9 LB VII 201F–202E / CWE 49 77–8. Erasmus himself spent liberally but took sufficient thought for the morrow to leave a considerable estate. For details see J. Hoyoux 'Les moyens d'existence d'Erasmus' BHR 5 (1944) 7–59; Allen XI 362–3 Appendix 25.

- 274 Matt 6:33; Luke 12:31. The Greek and Vulgate texts have 'all' these things; the colloquy omits 'all,' perhaps by an oversight.
- 275 Matt 6:25
- 276 *anima*, the word in the Vulgate, can often be translated 'life' (*vita*), which Erasmus prefers here (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 38E). On *anima* as 'soul' see 'The New Mother' nn38 and 53.
- 277 Matt 6:25–34
- 278 The Latin here is that of 1 Cor 7:31 (Vulg), but in his note on that verse Erasmus argues that the verb for 'use' does not have the same meaning in both parts of 'using . . . use it not,' for 'use it not' in the Greek original means 'not using it up,' 'not abusing it.' See *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 690D–E.
- 279 'mammon,' as at 200:31 above
- 280 *bellaria*, as at 187:3 and 198:2. Desserts were often sweetmeats or pastries.
- 281 See 182:27–40 above. The meal ends, as it began, with cleansing of hands and hearts. To begin with a blessing and end with a grace was common custom (cf Lefranc *La vie quotidienne* [n95 above] 149). See also 'Youth' n21.
- 282 183:1–5 above. This grace too is included in Erasmus' *Precationes* LB V 1210D–E.
- 283 See n98 above.
- 284 But there's . . . reverent thought.] These lines, omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript, were added in the July–August 1522 edition.
- 285 With this paragraph compare 'Faith' 424:14–428:3.
- 286 *iustitiam*. By the gift of sanctifying grace (see 202:23–4, lines 21–2 below) he made man 'just' – that is, right with God – and enabled him to aspire to holiness and labour to that end (Rom 3:21–4).
- 287 *apophoreta*, presents for the guests to take with them. The word is borrowed from Martial, who in book 14 mentions 223 examples. Erasmus uses the term in 'The Well-to-do Beggars' (474:8).
- 288 *Historia Augusta: Heliogabalus* 22.1. He was emperor 218–22.
- 289 Egyptian or reed pens; cf Martial 14.38. In 1516 Erasmus gave one, a present from Johann Reuchlin, to a young friend (CWE 85–6 134–5, 531 no 61 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 323 no 103).
- 290 Eusebius] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 291 Matt 25:29. Cf 184:13–14 above.
- 292 *horologium*. Probably a clock with a mainspring, a kind fairly new at this date. It was a square box (often ornamented) or a flat metal drum, with the dial on the upper face. Since it was portable it would have been smaller than the weight-driven chamber clock hanging on the wall behind the More family group in Holbein's famous painting. On that clock see E.E. Reynolds *The Field is Won: The Life and Death of Saint Thomas More* (London 1968) 189.
- 293 'From far-off Dalmatia' (region along the coast east of the Adriatic) may be another way of saying it is gold or partly gold (see Statius *Silvae* 1.2.153, 3.3.90, 4.7.13); hence Eusebius has an excuse for praising it. Erasmus bequeathed a gold sand-glass (*horologium harenarium*) to his friend Ludwig Baer, the Basel theologian (Allen VI 503:18–20 Appendix 19; XI 364:15 Appendix 25). It may have been the clock given to him by Krzysztof Szydłowiecki, chancellor of Poland.

- 294 Sophronius] In this distribution of gifts the names of certain recipients, beginning with Sophronius, and Chrysoglottus' thanks at 204:22–3, are omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript but appear in the July–August 1522 edition.
- 295 No ... diligent.] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 296 Theophilus ... regret your gift.] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in July–August 1522 edition
- 297 As Eulalius said at 189:35–6 above
- 298 Eulalius ... good counsel.] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 299 *lucernula*, a word remembered from Jerome Ep 107.9
- 300 *helluoni*; on this word see *De copia* 1.11 CWE 24 308:22–7.
- 301 'prolific writer' is Greek in the original.
- 302 Theodidactus ... instruments!] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 303 Erasmus shared the admiration of his epoch for Plutarch. He valued especially the *Moralia*, some of which he translated (LB IV 1–84) and often quotes. One of these translations he dedicated to Henry VIII (*De discrimine adulatoris et amici* 'How to Tell a Friend from a Flatterer' LB IV 1A–22E; Ep 272) another to Wolsey (*De utilitate capienda ex inimicis*, the essay on taking profit from one's enemies, LB IV 23A–30B; Ep 284). Princes should study this author (*Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 857F / Born 200 / CWE 27 251). The Aldine Plutarch was being printed when Erasmus lived in Venice and worked on the *Adagia*. His copy of Plutarch *Opuscula LXXXXII* (Venice: Aldus and Asulanus 1509) is preserved in the Provinciale Bibliotheek van Friesland at Leeuwarden. As Socrates drew philosophy from heaven to earth, Plutarch brought it into the home (Allen Ep 1572:65). See 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' n42.
- 304 Uranius] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; it was added in the July–August 1522 edition. 'Hellenist' is Greek in the original.
- 305 Nephalius] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 306 and ... pictures] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 307 Matt 26:17–30; Mark 14:16–26; Luke 22:7–20; 1 Cor 11:23–6
- 308 Matt 14:3–12; Mark 6:21–9
- 309 Luke 16:19–31. Herod and Lazarus were subjects so common in medieval and Renaissance art that whether Erasmus is thinking here of specific representations of them is impossible to tell. He translated four homilies of Chrysostom on Dives and Lazarus (LB VIII 57B–94E).
- 310 On her swallowing of the pearl see Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.119–21.
- 311 A drunken centaur tried to abduct the bride of Pirithous, king of the Lapiths, thus causing a battle that ended in the defeat of the Centaurs (Homer *Odyssey* 21.295–304; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 12.210–535). Lucian's *Lapithae*, describing a dinner party that broke up in a brawl, was translated by Erasmus (LB I 329A–337F / ASD I-1 604–17). Cf 'A Marriage in Name Only' 844:18–19.
- 312 In a drunken rage the king killed Clitus, one of his generals, with a spear (Plutarch *Alexander* 50–1). His notorious intemperance, said to have caused his

death, became a commonplace for moralists. See 'The Fabulous Feast' 575:30–3 and n19.

The three pictures on Christian themes and the others recalling classical stories, as Eusebius points out, are to be valued as contrasts between Christian values and pagan licentiousness and violence. Like Erasmus, Eusebius judges art by its moral worth.

- 313 A terrestrial globe within a simple framework allowing it to be turned in any direction. The frontispiece of the edition of the *Colloquia* by Cornelius Schrevelius (Amsterdam 1693; first printed at Leiden 1655) has such a globe; one of the four men seated beside it is obviously intended for Erasmus.
- 314 Erasmus strongly approved of having appropriate maxims, mottoes, and quotations painted on walls and doors, and even on rings and drinking cups, as an aid to memory. See *De ratione studii* CWE 24 671:5–672:6 and n20 above. He was delighted with the 'speaking pictures' he saw in Johann von Botzheim's house in Constance in September 1522 (Allen Ep 1342:341 / CWE Ep 1342:377–8), shortly after this colloquy was published. So George Herbert of a parson's house: 'Even the wals are not idle, but something is written, or printed there, which may excite the reader to a thought of piety' (*A Priest to the Temple, Or, the Country Parson* 10, 'The Parson in His House'). On the beams of the ceiling in Montaigne's tower were 'fifty-odd quotations in Greek and Latin . . . stressing man's frailty and ignorance' (Donald M. Frame *Montaigne: A Biography* [New York 1965] 120).
- 315 *autorum*, here 'authorities,' 'teachers,' 'founders,' 'leaders,' not only or chiefly writers. Christ the teacher wrote nothing but was 'author' of the Gospels.
- 316 The Transfiguration: Matthew 17:1–6; Mark 9:2–7; Luke 9:28–35
- 317 The greatest of ancient painters (fourth century BC). Cf *Parabola* CWE 23 220, 228, 244, 276.
- 318 Eusebius] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 319 Chapter 2
- 320 Matt 8:3; Mark 1:41; Luke 5:13
- 321 Alluding to the typological character of the Old Testament; see n117. Christ was believed to have spoken through the patriarchs, the psalmist, and the prophets before his life on earth.
- 322 *Adagia* I vi 87; cf Cicero *De senectute* 14.49.
- 323 The south-east and south-west ends of the gallery
- 324 That is, one chamber looks out upon the orchard and aviary, the other upon the meadow and infirmary
- 325 See 181:18–19 above.
- 326 'victory celebration' is Greek in the original.
- 327 Diana; see 'Patterns' n59.

THE APOTHEOSIS OF THAT INCOMPARABLE WORTHY, JOHANN REUCHLIN

*De incomparabili heroe Ioanne Reuchlino
in divorum numerum relato*

First printed in the July–August 1522 edition.

ms Thottske Saml 73 Fol in the Royal Library at Copenhagen (see the introduction to ‘The Godly Feast’ 171) contains the text of this colloquy to 251:1; Erasmus made a few changes and additions before the text was finally printed. ASD prints the textual variants, the more significant of which are recorded in the notes to this translation.

At first the Latin title was the one printed above, preceded by the names of the two speakers. Beginning with the edition of March 1524, *Apotheosis Capnionis* is added as a running title. On the name see n8 below. Erasmus calls the dialogue simply *Apotheosis* in December 1522 (Allen Ep 1380:63) and in ‘The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*’ (1101:16).

The ‘Apotheosis of Reuchlin’ celebrates a Christian scholar who, in his later years, was both victim and hero of a notorious campaign by certain German Dominicans against humanist enlightenment. ‘Triple-tongued’ Reuchlin (1454/5–1522), a native of Pforzheim, was a scholar proficient in Latin and Greek but most eminent for his work in Hebrew philology and his studies of the Cabbala (*De verbo mirifico* 1494, *De arte cabalistica* 1517), the mainly Jewish theosophy in which he, like some other humanists (notably Pico della Mirandola), thought they found illumination of Christian doctrines. In 1509 one Johann Pfefferkorn, a converted Jew, urged the emperor Maximilian to suppress all Jewish books except the Old Testament. Reuchlin opposed this rash scheme, advising that only books that were clearly blasphemous should be destroyed; the rest were useful and should be preserved. There was no burning of the books. Maximilian did issue several edicts or mandates in 1509 and later, the first of which gave Pfefferkorn authority to confiscate the offensive books. Final action awaited concurrence from the imperial diet, which never acted (see Johannes Janssen *History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages* trans M.A. Mitchell and A.M. Christie 16 vols and index [London 1896–1925] III [1900] 44–61).

Reuchlin published a tract, *Augenspiegel* (1511), exposing Pfefferkorn’s errors. (Erasmus owned a copy of *Augenspiegel*, of *De verbo mirifico*, and of Reuchlin’s Hebrew grammar; see Husner 238 no 22, 240 no 176, 242 no 80.) Pfefferkorn had the support of the ‘black birds’ of Erasmus’ colloquy – Dominicans, who wore a black habit – and the affair quickly turned into a feud

between conservatives, obscurantists, and anti-Semites on one side and, on the other side, partisans of *bonae literae*. Jacob of Hoogstraten, prior of the Cologne Dominicans and inquisitor-general for the district, haled Reuchlin before the court of the Inquisition as a heretic. A papal commission exonerated Reuchlin in 1514, but some years later, when the case was renewed, the pope ruled against him, sentenced him to pay costs, and imposed silence upon him (1520).

Reuchlin had published in his defence some letters by friends, *Clarorum virorum epistolae* (1514). These are memorable because they inspired one of the most entertaining of sixteenth-century satires, the anonymous *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* (1515 or 1516), which in deliberately barbarous but clever Latin made fun of the ignorance and pedantry of Reuchlin's opponents.

Erasmus was not a Hebraist and had little interest in the Cabbala (Allen Epp 798:19–23, 967:71, 1033:35–6 / CWE Epp 798:20–4, 967:79–80, 1033:42), but he was always sensitive to attacks on literature and scholarship. He defended Reuchlin, not immediately but earnestly (Allen Ep 334:178–206 / CWE Ep 334:187–218), as the character and purpose of Reuchlin's assailants became more clear. He deplored persecution (Ep 1001, to Hoogstraten). Pfefferkorn he denounced as 'once a damned Jew and now a most damnable Christian' (Allen Ep 697:11–12 / CWE Ep 697:14–15; see also Allen Ep 694:34–107 / CWE Ep 694:35–113 and Epp 700, 701, 703, 713 passim, all of November 1517). Yet his opinions were inconsistent. More than once he writes as though Reuchlin, like Luther, was causing trouble for *bonae literae* (see Allen Ep 1155:18n and CWE Ep 1155 n5). Concerned to retain his independence and be free of involvement with Luther and Reuchlin alike, he wanted to avoid associating himself too closely with Reuchlin. This is why he writes in October 1519 to the cardinal-archbishop of Mainz, Albert of Brandenburg, 'I have never had any connection either with Reuchlin's business or with the case of Luther' (Allen Ep 1033:34 / CWE Ep 1033:40–1). He deplores the injustice of attacks on Reuchlin but adds, 'I am no "Reuchlinist." I belong to no man's party.' (Allen Ep 1041:13 / CWE Ep 1041:15–16). On this ambivalence see Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 324–31 and the article on Reuchlin in CEBR.

Reuchlin died 30 June 1522. Conradus Pellicanus, another pioneer in Hebrew studies, says it was he who informed Erasmus of the death, and implies that he suggested this colloquy (*Chronikon* ed Bernard Riggensbach [Basel 1877] 79). However that may be, Erasmus must have written the colloquy very soon after receiving the news, because it was ready for the press in a few weeks. If at times he had been ambiguous or disingenuous about Reuchlin in his correspondence, he must be credited nevertheless with having contributed by this colloquy a memorial that was read by many who never opened Reuchlin's learned treatises and never intended to do so. It is a warm tribute and has an attractive freshness – in the remarks about

Jerome's dress and his lion, for example – that save it from being a merely conventional encomium.

For *Augenspiegel* see a facsimile reprint ed Josef Benzing, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Humanismus und der Reformation in Faksimile-Ausgaben* 5 (Munich c 1961). On Reuchlin and the Cabala see L.W. Spitz 'Reuchlin's Philosophy: Pythagoras and Cabala for Christ' *ARG* 47 (1956) 1–20; W.L. Gundersheimer 'Erasmus, Humanism, and the Christian Cabala' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 26 (1963) 38–52; Charles Zika 'Reuchlin and Erasmus: Humanism and Occult Philosophy' *Journal of Religious History* 9 (1977) 223–46; on his *De verbo mirifico* in particular Charles Zika 'Reuchlin's "De verbo mirifico" and the Magic Debate of the Late Fifteenth Century' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976) 104–38; on his biblical studies W. Schwarz *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation* (Cambridge 1961) 61–91; G. Lloyd Jones *The Discovery of Hebrew in Tudor England* (Manchester 1983) 18–38. On Reuchlin and Erasmus see Manfred Krebs 'Reuchlins Beziehungen zu Erasmus von Rotterdam' in *Johannes Reuchlin 1455–1522* ed Manfred Krebs (Pforzheim 1955) 139–55 and Carl S. Meyer 'Erasmus and Reuchlin' *Moreana* 24 (1969) 65–80; other recent studies are cited in Zika's articles, to which may be added J.H. Overfield *Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany* (Princeton 1984) and Peter Bietenholz 'Erasmus und die letzten Lebensjahre Reuchlins' *Historische Zeitschrift* 240 (1985) 45–66. On Pellicanus and Erasmus see H. Meylan in *Colloquium Erasmianum* 245–54. The *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* is edited and translated by F.G. Stokes (London 1909; repr 1925). Erasmus' *Apotheosis* has been edited, with Italian translation, introduction, and commentary by Giulio Vallese (Naples 1949; 3rd ed 1964).

POMPILIUS, BRASSICANUS¹

Pompilius Where from in that travelling-cap?²

Brassicanus From Tübingen.

5 **Pompilius** Nothing new there?

Brassicanus Really, I marvel at the universal human thirst for novelty. Yet at Louvain I heard a certain camel³ preaching that anything new was to be shunned.

Pompilius A saying fit for a camel! The man (if indeed he was a man)
10 deserved never to change his old shoes or dirty underwear, always⁴ to eat rotten eggs, and drink nothing but mouldy wine.

Brassicanus Still – to set you straight – the same fellow doesn't delight in old things to the extent of preferring leftover soup to fresh.

Pompilius But camel aside, tell me if you bring any news.

Brassicanus I do – but bad news, as he⁵ said.

Pompilius But this itself will one day be old. So, of necessity, if everything old is good and everything new is bad, whatever's good now was bad once upon a time and what's now bad will some day be good.⁶

5 **Brassicanus** So it seems, by the camel's doctrine. In fact⁷ it follows that he who was a damned fool as a young man, because he was young, is now a respectable fool because he's grown old.

Pompilius But come on: give me your news.

Brassicanus The famous phoenix⁸ of learning, triple-tongued⁹ Johann
10 Reuchlin, is dead.

Pompilius Are you certain?

Brassicanus More certain than I would wish.

Pompilius But what misfortune is there in passing from the ills of this life into the fellowship of the blessed, leaving to after ages the immortal memory
15 of a glorious name?¹⁰

Brassicanus Who revealed this to you?

Pompilius It's self-evident. Surely one who lived as he did can die no other way.

Brassicanus But you'd be even more certain if you knew what I know.

20 **Pompilius** What, I beseech you?

Brassicanus I daren't tell.

Pompilius Why?

Brassicanus Because the person who confided it swore me to secrecy.

Pompilius Trust me on the same condition. I promise I won't say a word.

25 **Brassicanus** Though that sort of promise has often fooled me, nevertheless – well, I'll tell you, especially since it's the kind of thing that ought to be known by all good people. At Tübingen¹¹ there's a certain Franciscan,¹² a man regarded by everybody but himself as exceptionally holy.

Pompilius You mention a strong proof of true holiness.

30 **Brassicanus** You'd recognize the man and acknowledge it's true if I uttered his name.

Pompilius What if I guessed it?

Brassicanus All right.

Pompilius Bring your ear closer.

35 **Brassicanus** Why, since we're alone?

Pompilius It's the custom.¹³

Brassicanus The very one!

Pompilius He's a man who's absolutely trustworthy. Whatever he says will be a Sibylline oracle to me.¹⁴

40 **Brassicanus** Then hear the whole story with complete confidence. Our Reuchlin – a man¹⁵ who deserved never to age, languish, or die – was ill,

very seriously ill; but his condition gave promise of recovery. I went of a morning to my Franciscan to console myself with his discourse. For I too was sick along with my sick friend, whom I loved as a father.

Pompilius Tush! Who but a villain did not love him?

- 5 **Brassicanus** 'Brassicanus,' said my Franciscan friend, 'banish all grief from your mind. Our Reuchlin's illness is over.' 'What?' I said, 'has he suddenly recovered? Two days ago the doctors were not at all encouraging.' Then he said, 'He did recover, but in such a manner that hereafter he need fear no bad health. Don't weep' – for he saw the tears breaking through – 'before
10 you hear the whole story. I hadn't visited him for six days, but I prayed to the Lord daily for his welfare. Last night, when I had gone to bed after Matins,¹⁶ I had an exceedingly pleasant dream.'

Pompilius I anticipate something joyful.

- Brassicanus** You're not mistaken.¹⁷ 'I seemed,' he said, 'to be standing by a
15 little bridge leading to by far the most delightful of meadows.¹⁸ The verdure of grass and foliage, greener than emerald, so pleased the eye, clusters of flowers smiled with so unbelievable a variety of colours; everything was so fragrant, that the fields on this side of the stream bounding that most blessed meadow appeared to be neither alive nor flourishing but
20 all of them withered, dismal, and decayed. And while I was completely absorbed by that spectacle, Reuchlin had just gone by, saying in Hebrew as he passed, "Peace." He had already crossed the middle of the bridge¹⁹ before I was aware of him. Looking back and seeing me about to rush up, he forbade me. "It is not yet allowed," he said. "Five years hence you shall
25 follow me. Meanwhile stand by as a spectator and witness of what happens here."''

- 'Was Reuchlin clothed or naked?' I asked. 'Alone or accompanied?' 'He wore no clothing,' was the answer, 'except one dazzlingly white, marvellously shining robe – damask, you'd have said. After him came a
30 winged youth of wondrous beauty – his guardian angel, I supposed.'

Pompilius But did no evil spirit accompany him?²⁰

- Brassicanus** Oh, yes, a number of them, as the Franciscan thought. Far behind, he said, some birds followed,²¹ black-feathered save that with wings spread they displayed plumage more yellowish²² than white. In colour and
35 cry they might have passed for magpies, except that each one was the size of sixteen²³ magpies; they were as big as vultures, with crests, hooked beaks and talons, and puffed-up bellies. Had there been only three of them, they might have been taken for harpies.

Pompilius What were those furies up to?

- 40 **Brassicanus** They were screaming at our illustrious Reuchlin from a distance, he said, and looked as if they would attack him if they could.

Pompilius What prevented them?

Brassicanus The fact that Reuchlin turned round, made the sign of the cross with outstretched hand, and said, 'Be off, you accursed pests, to where you belong. You ought to be satisfied with working mischiefs on mortals; your
5 madness has no jurisdiction over me, now that I am enrolled among the immortals.' Scarcely had he said this (according to the Franciscan) when those foulest of birds flew away, but leaving behind them a stench that would make dung seem sweet marjoram or spikenard by comparison. He swore²⁴ he'd sooner go to hell than bear the blast of such perfume again.

10 **Pompilius** A curse on those pests!

Brassicanus But hear what else the Franciscan told me. 'While I was intent on these things,' said he, 'St Jerome²⁵ had already approached the bridge. He accosted Reuchlin with these words: "Hail, most holy colleague.²⁶ I am appointed to receive you and conduct you to the heavenly fellowship that
15 the divine goodness has ordained for your sacred labours." And at the same time he brought forth a robe and put it on Reuchlin.' 'Tell me,' I said, 'just what did Jerome look like? How was he dressed? Was he as old as they paint him, or was he wearing a cowl, or the hat and mantle of a cardinal, or did he have his lion with him?'²⁷ 'Nothing of the sort,' he replied. 'His
20 appearance was pleasant; it showed his age, but in such a way that he didn't look run-down but quite dignified. And what need had he there of the lion those painters have added as his companion? He wore an ankle-length robe you'd describe as transparent crystal, like the one he presented to Reuchlin. It was decorated all over with tongues in a threefold variety of colours: some
25 showed bronze, others emerald, others sapphire; all were dazzling and were arranged in a way that added no little beauty.'

Pompilius I suppose that signified the three languages in which they excelled.²⁸

Brassicanus Undoubtedly. For, according to him,²⁹ the borders seemed to
30 be inscribed in the three languages, in three different colours.

Pompilius Jerome wasn't alone, was he?

Brassicanus Alone, you say? That whole plain was thronged with myriads of spirits;³⁰ they filled the air like the tiny bodies called atoms³¹ that we see flying about in sunbeams – if comparison with something so commonplace
35 is permissible. Neither sky nor plain would have been visible at all, had not everything been translucent.

Pompilius Bravo! I congratulate Reuchlin. What happened next?

Brassicanus Jerome (he said), to honour Reuchlin, led him by the right hand into the midst of the meadow, where there was a hill. On its summit they
40 embraced and kissed each other affectionately.³² And meanwhile the sky overhead parted asunder, displaying an inexpressible majesty, such that by

comparison with that spectacle everything else was almost mean, though before it had seemed marvellous.

Pompilius Can't you give me some idea of it?

Brassicanus How could I when I didn't see it? The one who did see it
5 insisted he couldn't begin to describe even a vision of the real vision; he said only this, that he was ready to die a thousand times if he were allowed to enjoy that sight again for one fleeting instant.

Pompilius What then?

Brassicanus From³³ the opening in the sky descended a great pillar of fire,³⁴
10 dazzling but beautiful. By this means, those two most holy souls, clasping each other, were conveyed to heaven,³⁵ accompanied by such ravishing music of angelic choirs that the Franciscan swore he could never recall its delight without bursting into tears. A wonderful fragrance followed them.³⁶ When he woke up – if indeed he can be said to have been asleep
15 – he was like one raving; he couldn't believe he was in his little cell; he kept calling for his bridge and meadow; he could talk or think of nothing else. The elders of his community, when they perceived this was no idle tale (for it was discovered Reuchlin had departed this earth at the very hour that holiest of men saw his vision), thanked God with one accord
20 for rewarding the good works of the righteous with surpassingly glorious gifts.

Pompilius What remains, then, but that we inscribe the holy man's name in the calendar of saints?³⁷

Brassicanus I intended to do that even if the Franciscan had seen nothing of
25 this sort – and in letters of gold, next to St Jerome.

Pompilius Upon my life, I'll do the same in my book.

Brassicanus³⁸ What's more, I'll have a golden image of him in my chapel,³⁹ among my favourite saints.

Pompilius And a jewelled one shall stand in mine, if I can afford to carry
30 out my wish.

Brassicanus One shall be placed in my library, too, next to Jerome.

Pompilius And in mine.

Brassicanus Indeed all devoted students of languages and literature, especially sacred literature, will do likewise if they want to show their
35 gratitude.

Pompilius Clearly he deserves it. But aren't you troubled by the objection that he has not yet been made a saint by authority of the pope?⁴⁰

Brassicanus Who canonized⁴¹ (as they term it) St Jerome? or Paul? or the Virgin Mother? Whose memory is more sacred among all the devout: that of
40 persons whose extraordinary holiness and the records of their character and life recommend them to the heart of everyone,⁴² or of Catherine of Siena,⁴³

whom Pius II is said to have added to the number of saints to please an order and a city?⁴⁴

Pompilius You're right. True worship, after all, is that freely paid to the heaven-deserving merits of the dead, merits whose good effects are felt forever.

Brassicanus Well, then, do you think this man's death is to be lamented? He lived a long time – if that fact makes for human happiness. He left behind him imperishable memorials of his worth. By good deeds he consecrated his name to immortality. Now, freed from misfortune, he enjoys heaven and converses with Jerome.

Pompilius Yet during his lifetime he suffered many ills.

Brassicanus But St Jerome endured more.⁴⁵ For the sake of good it is happiness to suffer from evildoers.

Pompilius Of course. For the sake of good Jerome bore much at the hands of the wicked.

Brassicanus What Satan once wrought against the Lord Jesus through scribes and Pharisees he brings to pass even now, through certain pharisaical persons, against some of the best men: ones deserving well of mankind, too, for their long nights of toil. That man now reaps the rich harvest he sowed.⁴⁶

Our part, meantime, will be to keep his memory hallowed, praise his name, and salute him often in this wise: 'O sacred spirit, bless languages and those who study them; prosper godly speech; bring to nought evil speech, infected by the poison of hell.'⁴⁷

Pompilius So will I do and urge others to do likewise. Yet I doubt not there will be many who would like some brief prayer – as is customary – with which to honour the memory of that most holy hero.

Brassicanus You mean what they call a collect?⁴⁸

Pompilius Yes.

Brassicanus I had made one before his death.

Pompilius Recite it, please.

Brassicanus 'O God thou lover of mankind, who through thy chosen servant Johann Reuchlin hast renewed to the world the gift of tongues by which thou didst once from heaven, through thy Holy Spirit, instruct the apostles for the preaching of the gospel, grant that all men everywhere may preach in every tongue the glory of thy Son Jesus. Confound the tongues of false apostles who band together to build an impious tower of Babel, attempting to obscure thy glory whilst minded to exalt their own, since to thee alone, with Jesus thy Son our Lord, and the Holy Spirit, belongs all glory, for ever and ever. Amen.'⁴⁹

Pompilius A beautiful and devout prayer. I'll say it every day, I swear. How lucky for me to have run into you and to hear such good news!

Brassicanus Enjoy it long, and farewell.

Pompilius Farewell to you too.

Brassicanus I'll fare well, but I'm not two.⁵⁰

NOTES

- 1 Johannes Brassicanus was a young Tübingen scholar who succeeded Reuchlin as professor of philology at Ingolstadt and from 1524 until his death in 1539 taught at Vienna. He had been acquainted with Erasmus since 1519 (see Allen Ep 1146 introduction). The name Pompilius is not satisfactorily explained, but see Smith *Key* 12.
- 2 Perhaps a memory of Cicero *Ad familiares* 15.17.1 'petasati veniunt.' A *petasus* was a broad-brimmed felt hat. Mercury, as messenger of the gods, is often shown with one.
- 3 Punning on 'Carmelite' but alluding also to the proverbial stupidity and ineptitude of camels (*Adagia* II vii 66: *Camelus saltat*). This 'camel' was Nicolaas Baechem (Egmondanus), 'stolidus ac furiosus' (Allen Ep 1515:11), prior of the Carmelites at Louvain, an unrelenting enemy of Erasmus and the *Colloquies*. See Allen Ep 878:13n; Allen I 24:36–25:31 / CWE Ep 1341A: 928–62; on Baechem's criticisms see also 'Rash Vows' nn14 and 24, 'Youth' nn53, 57, 69, 'The Profane Feast' n76. In a letter of October 1520 to the rector of the University of Louvain, Erasmus complained of Baechem's intemperate denunciations of whatever was new and his obstinate insistence that whatever was old must always be preferred. Baechem was particularly critical of Erasmus' edition of the Greek New Testament and his Latin translation of it (Allen Ep 1153:68–83, 168–86 / CWE Ep 1153:78–93, 191–209). He also detected Lutheran sentiments in some passages of the *Colloquies*, an accusation Erasmus indignantly denied (Allen Ep 1153:101–15 / CWE Ep 1153:134–51). On Baechem see further CEBR. On Erasmus and the Carmelite order, which he disliked, see H.T. van Veen 'Erasmus on the "Carmelite Taboo"' BHR 43 (1981) 335–9.
- 4 always ... wine] Omitted in the Copenhagen manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 5 The 'camel' referred to
- 6 A similar remark, with specific reference to versions of the New Testament, occurs in the *Apologia* to Erasmus' edition (LB VI **2 verso 'Proinde ... fuerit').
- 7 In fact ... old.] Omitted in the manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 8 In ancient myth the extremely rare bird of Arabia (*Adagia* II vii 10) which every 500 years consumed itself in fire and then came back to life. Reuchlin was 'the true phoenix and especial glory' of Germany because he contributed so much to the revival of learning (Allen Ep 335:306–7 / CWE Ep 335:321–2); in this distinction he stood next to Rodolphus Agricola (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* [on 2 Cor 6:15] LB VI 772c). In Christian art the phoenix was a symbol of rebirth and of the resurrection of Christ. See Clement of Rome *First Epistle to the Corinthians* 25–6 PG 1 262–6; Tertullian *De resurrectione carnis* 13 CSEL 47 42; Lactantius *De ave phoenice*, a poem regarded by Erasmus as 'not without elegance' (*Adagia* II vii 10: *Phoenixe ravior* LB II 615e) PL 7 277–84. It typified likewise endurance

and patience (Picinelli *Mundus symbolicus* book 4 nos 570–99), ideas which have obvious relevance to Erasmus' tribute to Reuchlin. Because Reuchlin, later in the colloquy, is seen in a vision to have been carried to heaven, he is by analogy a phoenix in the Christian sense as well as an agent in the rebirth of learning. Reuchlin sometimes called himself, and was called by others, Capnion (for example by Hutten; Allen Ep 923:29), and so he signs himself in his earliest printed letter to Erasmus (Allen Ep 290:30). 'Capnion' is a Greek equivalent, transliterated, of *rauchig* 'smoky'; 'Reuchlin' is comparable to *rauchig* plus the diminutive ending *-lin*. Symbolically smoke and death were associated in antiquity (as in Plato *Phaedo* 70A). By the conjunction of death (smoke) and death overcome (the phoenix), Erasmus suggests in a single sentence the ultimate victory of Reuchlin over his detractors.

- 9 Learned in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. See 'The Epithalamium' 523:21–4 and n19.
- 10 These lines recall those on Cato in 'The Godly Feast' (192:32–193:1). The last phrase, 'the immortal memory of a glorious name,' is repeated in 'The Lover of Glory' 965:23, as Vallese notes in his edition [introduction 246 above] 112n.
- 11 Reuchlin was teaching there in 1522 until his death in June of that year.
- 12 Some of Erasmus' readers or friends may have thought he meant Pellicanus as the Franciscan informant, although Pellicanus was living in Basel in 1522. He and Erasmus were close friends until, in 1526, Pellicanus moved to Zürich and joined the Zwinglians.
- 13 After this word he whispers the name.
- 14 *Adagia* I viii 91. See 'Additional formulae' n15.
- 15 a man ... die] Omitted in the manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 16 Originally a night office, said at midnight; later at two in the morning, and still later said 'by anticipation' in the evening
- 17 *Adagia* III ix 15 quotes only *Iliad* 18.312–13, but the phrase *mens non laeva* is in Virgil *Eclogues* 1.16.
- 18 The Franciscan's vision of Reuchlin's ascent to heaven and of the ineffable beauty and happiness there includes traditional elements, both pagan and Christian, familiar in art and literature, especially in poetry. See Howard R. Patch *The Other World* (Cambridge, Mass 1950, with a good bibliography). Erasmus himself had a 'vision' of St Francis at a time (1532) when he was criticizing certain members of the order and their claims in the *Colloquies* (Allen Ep 2700:37–55). For this dream see 'The Seraphic Funeral' n17. Erasmus needed no sources except his imagination for his brief description, but both the topic and the details of this and later passages have many parallels, including such famous but diverse texts as the myth of Er in Plato's *Republic* 10.614B–618B, 619B–621D and Dante's picture of the earthly paradise in *Purgatorio* 28. The scene may owe something to *Aeneid* 6.637–41, 656–9 and to Pindar fragment 129, which Erasmus may have known first in Plutarch's *Moralia* 120C *Consolatio ad Apollonium*. Lucian's *Vera historia* is another obvious parallel, as of course is biblical imagery. See Patch chapter 4.
- 19 Almost invariably found in recorded visions of passage from this world to the next
- 20 *genium bonum* ... *genius malus*; see *Adagia* I i 72 and 'Rash Vows' n22.

- 21 These odious black birds represent the Cologne Dominicans; see the introduction 244–5 above. The description here is suggested by *Aeneid* 3.210–18, where Aeneas encounters harpies in the Strophades Islands. On Erasmus and Dominicans see ‘Military Affairs’ n24.
- 22 Or brownish (*gilvas*)
- 23 sixteen] ‘Twelve’ in the manuscript and the March 1522 edition, ‘sixteen’ in the July–August 1522 edition and thereafter
- 24 He swore . . . again.] Omitted in the manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 25 The most suitable colleague and conductor of Reuchlin because he was, among the Fathers, the philologist and exegete *par excellence* and therefore the exemplar, to Erasmus, of Christian scholarship both for Reuchlin and for himself. See ‘Youth’ n17 and ‘The Soldier and the Carthusian’ n24.
- 26 In their criticism of certain parts of the colloquy (see 250:22–3 and n37 below) the Paris faculty of theology objected even to these words (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 936F).
- 27 In many pictures of Jerome his cardinal’s red hat and his lion are prominent, for example in Dürer’s famous engraving (1514) of the saint in his study, writing at his desk. In some he is shown with the lion; in others with hat or mantle (*pallium* here, apparently a *mantelletta*) but no lion; in still others with neither of these but with a skull. The cardinal’s hat and mantle are anachronisms; there was no college of cardinals and no distinctive dress for cardinals in Jerome’s age. On the lion see Herbert Friedmann *A Bestiary for Saint Jerome: Animal Symbolism in European Religious Art* (Washington, DC 1981) 229–68.
- 28 Note 9 above
- 29 according to him] Added in the September 1531 edition. ‘Him’ is the Franciscan.
- 30 *geniorum*, as at 248:30–1 above
- 31 Greek in the original
- 32 The *pax* or kiss of peace (*osculum pacis*) was a sign of brotherly love; common in early Christianity, it is perpetuated in the ceremonies of the mass.
- 33 With the Franciscan’s ecstasy compare the climactic passage of *Moriae encomium* (LB IV 502D–504B / ASD IV-3 192:233–194:267 / CWE 27 152–3) and see M.A. Screech’s important *Ecstasy and ‘The Praise of Folly’* (London 1980), especially 173–222.
- 34 As in Exodus 13:21–2 a symbol of divine favour and power
- 35 Cf the painting by Luca Signorelli (c 1520) of Christ escorting Jerome to heaven; it is reproduced in Eugene F. Rice Jr *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore 1985) figure 19.
- 36 The ‘odour of sanctity.’ In the ancient *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, said to be the earliest known history of a Christian martyrdom after that of Stephen in Acts 2, the author relates that when Polycarp was burned (in 155 or 156), witnesses ‘perceived such a fragrant smell as the scent of incense or other costly spices’ (*The Apostolic Fathers* trans Kirsopp Lake, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols [London and Cambridge, Mass 1912–13] II 333). Antecedents of this phenomenon occur in pagan legend; see Ovid *Metamorphoses* 15.391–400 on the phoenix.
- 37 The Paris theologians rebuked Erasmus for this proposal, and for his collect (251:31–9), protesting that such matters are not suitable for jokes. ‘Yes,’ he

- replied, I do jest [*iocor*] here, but what is to forbid speaking truth with a jest? For Reuchlin was a good man who, we may hope, lives with Christ' (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 937A). Jestng or joking in this passage does not imply insincerity or flippancy, but rather that he expresses his personal convictions, however informally and whatever ecclesiastics may think of them. Cf Erasmus' comment on Reuchlin in Allen Ep 1311:46–8 / CWE Ep 1311:39–40 and the similar proposal concerning Colet and Vitrier in Allen Ep 1211:628–31 / CWE Ep 1211:686–8.
- 38 Brassicanus ... And in mine.] Omitted in the manuscript; added in the July–August 1522 edition
- 39 *larario*, anciently the part of the house where the images of the household gods were kept
- 40 Authority for canonization was reserved to the Holy See.
- 41 *canonizavit*; *canonizare* is a Christian Latin word.
- 42 Defending this paragraph against the Paris theologians, Erasmus writes, 'How many saints does the church cherish whom the Roman see never registered in the roll of saints!' (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 937A).
- 43 Renowned for her devoutness, Catherine (1347–80), of the Third Order of Dominicans, also took an active and influential part in papal politics. Pope Pius II, himself a Siennese, was asked by fellow citizens in 1461 to canonize Catherine. After the customary investigation of her life and miracles he declared her a saint and granted visitors to her tomb an indulgence of seven years. See *Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: The Commentaries of Pius II* trans Florence A. Gragg, ed Leona C. Gabel (New York 1959; repr 1962) 189–90. In Allen Ep 447:275–7 / CWE Ep 447:299–302 Erasmus alludes scornfully to the extravagances of certain legends about Catherine.
- 44 The text in the Copenhagen manuscript ends at the beginning of this clause ('... Catarinae Senensis, quam in divarum').
- 45 In his controversies with Rufinus, Helvidius, Jovinian, and others on biblical and doctrinal questions
- 46 Reaping what one sows may echo Cicero *De oratore* 2.65.261 but primarily Gal 6:7. 'That man' is Reuchlin.
- 47 Erasmus treats both godly and evil speech at length in his *Lingua* (1525).
- 48 Essentially a short prayer addressed to God the Father and following a traditional arrangement, as illustrated here. Erasmus explains the structure of collects in *Modus orandi Deum* LB V 1125D–1126B.
- 49 This collect was adapted to a different purpose when it was included in Erasmus' *Precationes* (1535) LB V 1210A–B. There it has the title *Pro consensu dogmatum*, and the words 'through thy chosen servant Johann Reuchlin hast renewed to the world' are replaced by 'through thine apostles thought fit to grant.' This change may be due simply to Erasmus' desire to fit this prayer, like others, into the collection of *Precationes*, but possibly it is another indication that between 1522 and 1535 the warmth of his sentiments about Reuchlin had cooled somewhat.
- 50 In the Latin an untranslatable pun on *quoque* 'too' and *coquus* 'cook,' ascribed to Cicero by Quintilian 6.3.47–8

COURTSHIP

Proci et puellae

First printed in the August 1523 edition.

This edition contains five colloquies on various aspects of love, marriage, sexuality, and feminism: 'Courtship,' 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage,' 'The Repentant Girl,' 'Marriage,' and 'The Young Man and the Harlot.' To these were added in later editions 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' (1524), 'The Epithalamium of Pieter Gillis' (1524), 'The New Mother' (1526), 'A Marriage in Name Only' (1529), and 'The Council of Women' (1529). These ten dialogues constitute a 'marriage group' in which themes often discussed by Erasmus in tractates or commentaries are presented through dramatic sketches. More formal treatment can be found in *Encomium matrimonii* (1518), *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (1526), *De vidua christiana* (1529), annotations on the New Testament, and the apologies for those writings. In *Institutio christiani matrimonii* Erasmus examines consent, impediments, and other topics of canon law dealing with marriage. Msgr A.R.A. McCormack Capp. di S.S. has been of great assistance in clarifying the canonical issues involved in 'Courtship.'

Beneath the surface of polished and entertaining conversation in this colloquy lie serious ideas on love and marriage. As a product of imagination, the dialogue need not be regarded as a signed and sworn affirmation of the author's beliefs, yet the fact that it comes from Erasmus allows readers familiar with his other works to infer with confidence his opinions on themes argued here. For example the lines praising Christian marriage and questioning the unique worth of virginity (264:38–267:15), or appearing to do so, may be compared with those on monastic life in the following colloquy, 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage,' where the real issue is not virginity versus licit sexuality but the practical wisdom or folly of committing oneself to a course of life without sufficient thought – a life however that excludes marriage and requires a vow of chastity.

Pamphilus' oblique references to Platonic and Neoplatonic doctrines of the reciprocal relations of love and the soul, to fecundity in nature, and to the human response to the divine command to increase and multiply recall classic texts ancient and modern: Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* and Ficino's commentary on the *Symposium*, Petrarch's poems, Castiglione's *Courtier* (especially Bembo's famous exposition of love in book 4), Spenser's hymns in honour of love and beauty, Shakespeare's sonnets, Donne's love poetry, and much else from the wealth of Renaissance literature and art.

Pamphilus' arguments prove him a clever and resourceful rhetorician. He is a better pleader than logician but sincere as well as audacious, deeply in love with Maria but at the same time enjoying the language game he plays. The exchanges between the lovers are engagingly frank, with just enough badinage to save the pair from self-conceit and keep them convincingly human. Maria will marry her suitor when proper arrangements are made, but not earlier; she will not be swept off her feet. Catharine, in 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage,' is obsessed by an adolescent fancy for a conventual life and believes she has no wish to marry. Her lack of self-knowledge and of her true interests, as the sequel ('The Repentant Girl') makes clear, are a painful contrast with Maria's perceptiveness. Maria is one of Erasmus' best creations, comparable in poise, intelligence, and wit to the heroines of Shakespeare's romantic comedies.

This colloquy was criticized by some of Erasmus' accustomed detractors because of Pamphilus' freedom of language and implicit suggestion that marriage is superior to virginity (see n67 below). Neither this nor any other colloquy contains indecency or obscenity, Erasmus insists (Allen Ep 2037:22-6).

On a Spanish translation by Luis Mexía 1528 see Bataillon *Erasme et l'Espagne* 313, 321n.

An English translation by Nicholas Leigh was published in *A Modest Meane to Mariage* (London 1568; STC 10499), which contained also a translation of *Adolescentis et scorti*. Leigh says of 'Courtship' that 'albeit the naturall overthwartnesse of the womanishe minde, doth now and then burst out as out of the frayer and weaker vessell, yet is therein a godlye kinde of woeing without any scurilitie, very pleasantly, lively, and plainly declared and set forth, to the good behaviour and honest inducement and furtherance of such as are yet to take that matter or enterprise in hand, farre from provoking any vice, as the maner and guise of a number of lascivious Lovers and fayned woers nowe a dayes is . . .' (A4; Spurgeon 311). A version in rhymed couplets by Thomas Heywood was included in his *Pleasant Dialogues and Dramma's* (1637).

To list here some of the more recent and weighty studies of feminism in the Renaissance is neither necessary nor practicable; it is enough to call attention to a single useful survey, Ian Maclean's *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (Cambridge 1980).

PAMPHILUS,¹ MARIA

Pamphilus Hello, hello, and hello – you cruel, hard-hearted, unyielding² creature!

Maria Hello yourself, Pamphilus, as often and as much as you like, and by whatever name you please. But sometimes I think you've forgotten my name. It's Maria.

Pamphilus Well, you should have been named Martia.

5 **Maria** Why so? What have I to do with Mars?

Pamphilus You slay men for sport, as the god does. Except that you're more pitiless than Mars: you kill even a lover.

Maria Mind what you're saying. Where's this heap of men I've slain? Where's the blood of the slaughtered?

10 **Pamphilus** You've only to look at me to see one lifeless corpse.

Maria What do I hear? You talk and walk when you're dead? I hope I never meet more fearsome ghosts!

Pamphilus You're joking, but all the same you're the death of poor me, and you kill more cruelly than if you pierced with a spear. Now, alas, I'm just
15 skin and bones from long torture.

Maria Well, well! Tell me, how many pregnant women have miscarried at the sight of you?³

Pamphilus But my pallor shows I've less blood than any ghost.

Maria Yet this pallor is streaked with lavender. You're as pale as a ripening
20 cherry or a purple grape.

Pamphilus Shame on you for making fun of a miserable wretch!

Maria But if you don't believe me, bring a mirror.

Pamphilus I want no other mirror, nor do I think any could be brighter than the one in which I'm looking at myself now.

25 **Maria** What mirror are you talking about?

Pamphilus Your eyes.⁴

Maria Quibbler! Just like you. But how do you prove you're lifeless? Do ghosts eat?

Pamphilus Yes, but they eat insipid stuff, as I do.

30 **Maria** What do they eat, then?

Pamphilus Mallows, leeks, and lupins.⁵

Maria But you don't abstain from capons and partridges.

Pamphilus True, but they taste no better to my palate than if I were eating mallows, or beets without pepper, wine, and vinegar.⁶

35 **Maria** Poor you! Yet all the time you're putting on weight. And do dead men talk too?

Pamphilus Like me, in a very thin, squeaky voice.

Maria When I heard you wrangling with your rival not long ago, though, your voice wasn't so thin and squeaky. But I ask you, do ghosts even walk?

40 Wear clothes? Sleep?

Pamphilus They even sleep together⁷ – though after their own fashion.

Maria Well! Witty fellow, aren't you?

Pamphilus But what will you say if I demonstrate with Achillean⁸ proofs that I'm dead and you're a murderer?

Maria Perish the thought, Pamphilus! But proceed to your argument.

5 **Pamphilus** In the first place, you'll grant, I suppose, that death is nothing but the removal of soul from body?⁹

Maria Granted.

Pamphilus But grant it so that you won't want to take back what you've given.¹⁰

10 **Maria** I won't want to.

Pamphilus Then you won't deny that whoever robs another of his soul is a murderer?

Maria I allow it.

Pamphilus You'll concede also what's affirmed by the most respected
15 authors and endorsed by the assent of so many ages: that man's soul is not where it animates but where it loves?

Maria Explain this more simply. I don't follow your meaning well enough.

Pamphilus And the worse for me that you don't see this as clearly as I do.

Maria Try to make me see it.

20 **Pamphilus** As well try to make adamant see!

Maria Well, I'm a girl, not a stone.

Pamphilus True, but harder than adamant.¹¹

Maria But get on with your argument.

Pamphilus Men seized by a divine inspiration neither hear nor see nor
25 smell nor feel, even if you kill them.

Maria Yes, I've heard that.

Pamphilus What do you suppose is the reason?

Maria You tell me, professor.

Pamphilus Obviously because their spirit is in heaven, where it possesses
30 what it ardently loves, and is absent from the body.¹²

Maria What of it?

Pamphilus What of it, you unfeeling girl? It follows both that I'm dead and that you're the murderer.

Maria Where's your soul, then?

35 **Pamphilus** Where it loves.¹³

Maria But who robbed you of your soul? – Why do you sigh? Speak freely; I won't hold it against you.

Pamphilus Cruellest of girls, whom nevertheless I can't hate even if I'm dead!

40 **Maria** Naturally. But why don't you in turn deprive her of *her* soul – tit for tat,¹⁴ as they say?

Pamphilus I'd like nothing better if the exchange could be such that her spirit migrated to my breast, as my spirit has gone over completely to her body.

Maria But may I, in turn, play the sophist with you?

5 **Pamphilus** The sophistress.¹⁵

Maria It isn't possible for the same body to be living and lifeless, is it?

Pamphilus No, not at the same time.

Maria When the soul's gone, then the body's dead?

Pamphilus Yes.

10 **Maria** It doesn't animate except when it's present?

Pamphilus Exactly.

Maria Then how does it happen that although the soul's there where it loves, it nevertheless animates the body left behind? If it animates that body even when it loves elsewhere, how can the animated body be called lifeless?

15 **Pamphilus** You dispute cunningly enough, but you won't catch me with such snares. The soul that somehow or other governs the body of [a lover]¹⁶ is incorrectly called soul, since actually it consists of certain slight remnants of soul – just as the scent of roses remains in your hand even if the rose is taken away.

20 **Maria** Hard to catch a fox with a noose,¹⁷ I see. But answer me this: doesn't one who kills perform an act?

Pamphilus Of course.

Maria And the one who's killed suffers?

Pamphilus Yes indeed.

25 **Maria** Then how is it that although the lover is active and the beloved passive,¹⁸ the beloved is said to kill – when the lover, rather, kills himself?

Pamphilus On the contrary, it's the lover who suffers; the beloved does the deed.

Maria You'll never win this case before the supreme court of grammarians.¹⁹

30 **Pamphilus** But I'll win it before the congress of logicians.²⁰

Maria Now don't begrudge an answer to this, too: do you love willingly or unwillingly?

Pamphilus Willingly.

35 **Maria** Then since one is free not to love, whoever loves seems to be a self-murderer. To blame the girl is unjust.

Pamphilus Yet the girl doesn't kill by being loved but by failing to return the love. Whoever can save someone and refrains from doing so is guilty of murder.²¹

40 **Maria** Suppose a young man loves what is forbidden, for example another man's wife or a vestal virgin? She won't return his love in order to save the lover, will she?

Pamphilus But *this* young man loves what it's lawful and right, and reasonable and honourable, to love; and yet he's slain. If this crime of murder is trivial, I'll bring a charge of poisoning too.

Maria Heaven forbid! Will you make a Circe²² of me?

5 **Pamphilus** Something more pitiless than that. For I'd rather be a hog or a bear than what I am now, a lifeless thing.

Maria Well, just what sort of poison do I kill men with?

Pamphilus You bewitch them.

Maria Then you want me to keep my poisonous eyes off you hereafter?

10 **Pamphilus** Don't say such things. No, turn them on me more and more.

Maria If my eyes are charmers,²³ why don't the other men I look at languish too? So I suspect this witchcraft is in your own eyes, not in mine.

Pamphilus Wasn't it enough to slay Pamphilus without mocking him
15 besides?

Maria A handsome corpse! But when's the funeral?

Pamphilus Sooner than you think – unless you rescue me.

Maria Have I so much power?

Pamphilus You can bring a dead man back to life, and that with little
20 trouble.

Maria If someone gave me a cure-all.²⁴

Pamphilus No need of medicines; just return his love. What could be easier or fairer? In no other way will you be acquitted of the crime of homicide.

Maria Before which court shall I be tried? That of the Areopagites?²⁵

25 **Pamphilus** No, the court of Venus.

Maria She's an easygoing goddess, they say.

Pamphilus Oh, no, her wrath's the most terrible of all.

Maria Has she a thunderbolt?²⁶

Pamphilus No.

30 **Maria** A trident?²⁷

Pamphilus By no means.

Maria Has she a spear?²⁸

Pamphilus Not at all, but she's goddess of the sea.²⁹

Maria I don't go sailing.

35 **Pamphilus** But she has a boy.³⁰

Maria Not old enough to scare me.

Pamphilus He's vengeful and wilful.

Maria What will he do to me?

Pamphilus What will he do? Heaven avert it! I wouldn't want to predict
40 calamity to one whose welfare I have at heart.

Maria Tell me anyway. I'm not superstitious.

Pamphilus Then I'll tell you. If you reject this lover – who, unless I'm mistaken, is not altogether unworthy of having his love returned – the boy may, at his mother's bidding, shoot you with a dreadfully poisonous dart. As a result you'd fall desperately in love with some low creature who wouldn't return your love.³¹

Maria You tell me of a horrible punishment. For my part, I'd rather die than be madly in love with a man who's ugly or wouldn't return love for love.

Pamphilus Yet there was recently a much publicized example of this misfortune, involving a certain girl.

Maria Where?

Pamphilus At Orléans.³²

Maria How many years ago was this?

Pamphilus How many years? Scarcely ten months ago.

Maria What was the girl's name? Why do you hesitate?

Pamphilus Never mind. I know her as well as I do you.

Maria Why don't you tell me her name, then?

Pamphilus Because I don't like the omen.³³ I only wish she'd had some other name! Hers was the very same as yours.

Maria Who was her father?

Pamphilus He's still living. Eminent lawyer and well-to-do.

Maria Give me his name.

Pamphilus Maurice.

Maria Family name?

Pamphilus Bright.³⁴

Maria Is the mother living?

Pamphilus Died recently.

Maria What illness did she die of?

Pamphilus What illness, you ask? Grief. And the father, though one of the hardiest of men, was in mortal danger.

Maria May one know the mother's name too?

Pamphilus Of course. Everybody knew Sophronia. But why this questioning? Do you think I'm spinning some yarn?

Maria Would I suspect that of *you*? More commonly this suspicion is directed against our sex. But tell me what happened to the girl.

Pamphilus She was a girl of respectable, wealthy background, as I said, and extremely beautiful – in short, worthy to marry a prince. She was courted by a certain young man whose social standing was similar to hers.

Maria What was his name?

Pamphilus Alas, a bad omen³⁵ for me! Pamphilus was his name too. He tried everything, but she obstinately turned him down. The young man

wasted away with sorrow. Not long afterwards she fell desperately in love with one who was more like an ape than a man.³⁶

Maria What's that you say?

Pamphilus So madly in love it's inexpressible.

5 **Maria** So attractive a girl in love with so hideous a man?

Pamphilus He had a peaked head, thin hair – and that torn and unkempt, full of scurf and lice. The mange had laid bare most of his scalp; he was cross-eyed, had flat, wide-open nostrils like an ape's, thin mouth, rotten teeth, a stuttering tongue, pocky chin; he was hunchbacked, potbellied, and
10 had crooked shanks.

Maria You describe some Thersites³⁷ to me.

Pamphilus What's more, they said he had only one ear.

Maria Perhaps he lost the other in war.

Pamphilus Oh, no, in peace.

15 **Maria** Who dared do that to him?

Pamphilus Denis the hangman.³⁸

Maria Maybe a large family fortune made up for his ugliness.

Pamphilus Not at all; he was bankrupt and head over heels in debt.³⁹ With this husband, so exceptional a girl now spends her life and is often beaten.

20 **Maria** A wretched tale you tell.

Pamphilus But a true one. Thus it pleased Nemesis⁴⁰ to avenge the injury to the youth who was spurned.

Maria I'd rather be destroyed by a thunderbolt than put up with such a husband.

25 **Pamphilus** Then don't provoke Nemesis: return your lover's love.

Maria If that's enough. I do return it.

Pamphilus But I'd want this love to be lasting and to be mine alone. I'm courting a wife, not a mistress.

Maria I know that, but I must deliberate a long time over what can't be
30 revoked once it's begun.

Pamphilus *I've* thought it over a very long time.

Maria See that love, who's not the best adviser, doesn't trick you. For they say he's blind.

Pamphilus But one who proceeds with caution is keen-sighted. You don't
35 appear to me as you do because I love you; I love you because I've observed what you're like.

Maria But you may not know me well enough. If you wore the shoe, you'd feel then where it pinched.⁴¹

Pamphilus I'll have to take the chance,⁴² though I infer from many signs
40 that the match will succeed.

Maria You're a soothsayer too?

Pamphilus I am.

Maria Then by what auguries do you infer this? Has the night owl flown?⁴³

Pamphilus That flies for fools.

Maria Has a pair of doves flown from the right?⁴⁴

- 5 **Pamphilus** Nothing of the sort. But the integrity of your parents has been known to me for years now. In the first place, good birth is far from a bad sign. Nor am I unaware of the wholesome instruction and godly examples by which you've been reared; and good education is better than good birth. That's another sign. In addition, between my family – not an
10 altogether contemptible one, I believe – and yours there has long been intimate friendship. In fact, you and I have known each other from our cradle days,⁴⁵ as they say, and our temperaments are pretty much the same.⁴⁶ We're nearly equal in age;⁴⁷ our parents, in wealth, reputation, and rank. Finally – and this is the special mark of friendship, since excellence by itself is no
15 guarantee of compatibility – your tastes seem to fit my temperament not at all badly. How mine agree with yours, I don't know.

Obviously, darling, these omens assure me that we shall have a blessed, lasting, happy marriage, provided you don't intend to sing a song of woe for our prospects.

- 20 **Maria** What song do you want?

Pamphilus I'll play 'I am yours'; you chime in with 'I am yours.'⁴⁸

Maria A short song, all right, but it has a long finale.⁴⁹

Pamphilus What matter how long, if only it be joyful?

- Maria** I'm so prejudiced about you that I wouldn't want you to do something
25 you might be sorry for afterwards.

Pamphilus Stop looking on the dark side.

Maria Maybe I'll seem different to you when illness or old age has changed this beauty.⁵⁰

- Pamphilus** Neither will I always be as handsome as I am now, my dear. But
30 I don't consider only this dwelling place, which is blooming and charming in every respect. I love the guest more.

Maria What guest?

Pamphilus Your mind, whose beauty will forever increase with age.

- Maria** Truly you're more than a Lynceus⁵¹ if you see through so much
35 make-up!

Pamphilus I see your mind through mine. Besides, we'll renew our youth repeatedly in our children.⁵²

Maria But meantime my virginity is gone.⁵³

- Pamphilus** True, but see here:⁵⁴ if you had a fine orchard, would you want it
40 never to bear anything but blossoms or would you prefer, after the blossoms have fallen, to see the trees heavy with ripe fruit?⁵⁵

Maria How he prattles!

Pamphilus Answer this at least: which is the prettier sight, a vine rotting on the ground or encircling some post or elm tree and weighing it down with purple grapes?⁵⁶

5 **Maria** You answer *me* in turn: which is the more pleasing sight, a rose gleaming white on its bush or plucked and gradually withering?⁵⁷

Pamphilus In my opinion the rose that withers in a man's hand, delighting his eyes and nostrils the while, is luckier than one that grows old on a bush. For that one too would wither sooner or later. In the same way, wine is
10 better if drunk before it sours. But a girl's flower doesn't fade the instant she marries. On the contrary, I see many girls who before marriage were pale, run-down, and as good as gone.⁵⁸ The sexual side of marriage brightened them so much that they began to bloom at last.

Maria Yet virginity wins universal approval and applause.⁵⁹

15 **Pamphilus** A maiden is something charming, but what's more unnatural than an old maid?⁶⁰ Unless your mother had been deflowered, we wouldn't have this blossom here. But if, as I hope, our marriage will not be barren, we'll pay for one virgin with many.⁶¹

Maria But they say chastity is a thing most pleasing to God.

20 **Pamphilus** And therefore I want to marry a chaste girl, to live chastely with her. It will be more a marriage of minds than of bodies.⁶² We'll reproduce for the state;⁶³ we'll reproduce for Christ.⁶⁴ By how little will this marriage fall short of virginity!⁶⁵ And perhaps some day we'll live as Joseph and Mary did. But meantime we'll learn virginity; for one does not reach the summit
25 all at once.

Maria What's this I hear? Virginity to be violated in order to be learned?

Pamphilus Why not? As by gradually drinking less and less wine we learn temperance. Which seems more temperate to you, the person who, sitting down in the midst of dainties, abstains from them or the one secluded from
30 those things that invite intemperance?

Maria I think the man abundance cannot corrupt is more steadfastly temperate.

Pamphilus Which more truly deserves praise for chastity, the man who castrates himself or the one who, while sexually unimpaired, nevertheless
35 abstains from sexual love?⁶⁶

Maria My vote would go to the latter. The first I'd regard as mad.

Pamphilus But don't those who renounce marriage by a strict vow castrate themselves, in a sense?⁶⁷

Maria Apparently.

40 **Pamphilus** Now to abstain from sexual intercourse isn't a virtue.

Maria Isn't it?

Pamphilus Look at it this way.⁶⁸ If it were a virtue *per se* not to have intercourse, intercourse would be a vice. Now it happens that it is a vice not to have intercourse, a virtue to have it.

Maria When does this ‘happen’?

- 5 **Pamphilus** Whenever the husband seeks his due from his wife, especially if he seeks her embrace from a desire for children.⁶⁹

Maria What if from lust? Isn’t it right for him to be denied?

Pamphilus It’s right to reprove him, or rather to ask him politely to refrain. It’s not right to refuse him flatly – though in this respect I hear few husbands

- 10 complain of their wives.

Maria But liberty is sweet.⁷⁰

Pamphilus Virginity, on the other hand, is a heavy burden. I’ll be your king, you’ll be my queen;⁷¹ we’ll rule a family at our pleasure. Or does this seem servitude to you?

- 15 **Maria** The public calls marriage a halter.

Pamphilus But those who call it that really deserve a halter themselves. Tell me, I beg you, isn’t your soul bound to your body?⁷²

Maria Evidently.

Pamphilus Like a little bird in a cage. And yet ask him if he desires to be

- 20 free. He’ll say no, I think. Why? Because he’s willingly confined.

Maria Our fortune is modest.

Pamphilus So much the safer. You’ll increase it at home by thrift, which is not unreasonably called a large source of income;⁷³ I’ll increase it away from home by my industry.

- 25 **Maria** Children bring countless cares with them.

Pamphilus But they bring countless delights and often repay the parents’ devotion with interest many times over.

Maria Loss of children is a miserable experience.

- 30 **Pamphilus** Aren’t you childless now? But why expect the worst in every uncertainty? Tell me, which would you prefer, never to be born or to be born to die?⁷⁴

Maria I’d rather be born to die, of course.

Pamphilus As those who have lived are more fortunate than those who never were born and never will be born, so is childlessness the more

- 35 miserable in never having had and never expecting to have offspring.⁷⁵

Maria Who are these who are not and will not be?

Pamphilus Though one who refuses to run the risk of human life – to which all of us, kings and commoners alike, are equally liable – ought to give up life,⁷⁶ still, whatever happens, you’ll bear only half. I’ll take over the larger

- 40 share, so that if we have good luck the pleasure will be double; if bad,

companionship will take away half the pain. As for me, if heaven summons, it will be sweet to die in your arms.

Maria Men bear more readily what nature's universal laws decree.⁷⁷ But I observe how much more distressed some parents are by their children's conduct than by their death.

Pamphilus Preventing that is mostly up to us.

Maria How so?

Pamphilus Because, with respect to character,⁷⁸ good children are usually born of good parents. Kites don't come from doves. We'll try, therefore, to be good ourselves. Next, we'll see that our children are imbued from birth with sacred teachings and beliefs. What the jar is filled with when new matters most.⁷⁹ In addition, we'll see that at home we provide an example of life for them to imitate.

Maria What you describe is difficult.

Pamphilus No wonder, because it's good.⁸⁰ (And you're difficult too, for the same reason!) But we'll labour so much the harder to this end.

Maria You'll have tractable material to work with. See that you form and fashion me.⁸¹

Pamphilus But meanwhile say just three words.⁸²

Maria Nothing easier, but once words have flown out they don't fly back.⁸³ I'll give better advice for us both: confer with your parents and mine, to get the consent of both sides.

Pamphilus You bid me ask for your hand in marriage, but in three words you can make success certain.

Maria I don't know whether I could. I'm not a free agent. In former times marriages were arranged only by the authority of elders.⁸⁴ But however that may be, I think our marriage will have more chance of success if it's arranged by our parents' authority. And it's your part to make the proposal; that isn't appropriate to our sex. We girls like to be swept off our feet, even if sometimes we're deeply in love.

Pamphilus I won't be hesitant about making the proposal. Only don't let your decision alone defeat me.

Maria It won't. Cheer up, Pamphilus dear!

Pamphilus You're more strait-laced towards me in this business than I should like.

Maria But first ponder your own private decision. Judge by your reason, not your feeling. What emotion decides is temporary; rational choice generally pleases forever.

Pamphilus Indeed you philosophize very well, so I'm resolved to take your advice.

Maria You won't regret it. But see here: a disturbing difficulty has turned up.

Pamphilus Away with these difficulties!

Maria You wouldn't want me to marry a dead man?

5 **Pamphilus** By no means; but I'll revive.

Maria You've removed the difficulty. Farewell, Pamphilus darling.

Pamphilus That's up to you.

Maria I bid you good night. Why do you sigh?

Pamphilus 'Good night,' you say? If only you'd grant what you bid!

10 **Maria** Don't be in too great a hurry.⁸⁵ You're counting chickens before they're hatched.⁸⁶

Pamphilus Shan't I have anything from you to take with me?

Maria This sachet, to gladden your heart.

Pamphilus Add a kiss at least.

15 **Maria** I want to deliver to you a virginity whole and unblemished.

Pamphilus Does a kiss rob you of your virginity?⁸⁷

Maria Then do you want me to bestow my kisses on others too?

Pamphilus Of course not. I want your kisses kept for me.

Maria I'll keep them for you. Though there's another reason why I wouldn't
20 dare give away kisses just now.⁸⁸

Pamphilus What's that?

Maria You say your soul has passed almost entirely into my body and that there's only the slightest particle left in yours. Consequently, I'm afraid
25 this particle in you would skip over to me in a kiss and you'd then become quite lifeless.⁸⁹ So shake hands, a symbol of our mutual love; and farewell. Persevere in your efforts. Meanwhile I'll pray Christ to bless and prosper us both in what we do.

NOTES

1 In Terence's *Andria* the lover of Glycerium. Erasmus describes him as being 'as much in love as he could be' and 'wise for his years and very resourceful' (*De copia* CWE 24 384:17–18; *De ratione studii* CWE 24 689:2–3).

2 *Adagia* I vii 44, I vii 43

3 An image used again in 'A Fish Diet' 705:27 and 720:16

4 That the eyes are the gateway to love is a conceit found in literature since Plato. A lover sees himself in the eyes of the beloved 'as in a mirror' (Plato *Phaedrus* 255D). At first he is unaware of this fact, but Pamphilus is long past this initial stage. The depth of the experience is conveyed by Dante in three lines of his passage on Paolo and Francesca (*Inferno* 5.130–2). In Renaissance literature the idea is a commonplace (not always taken seriously; see *As You Like It* 3.5.8–27). Ficino's commentary on Plato's *Symposium* was an influential source, whether

- direct or indirect, of its use and elaboration in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century works. An English translation of this commentary by Sears Jayne, accompanied by Latin text, is available in *University of Missouri Studies* 19 no 1 (Columbia, Mo 1944). On Ficino see P.O. Kristeller *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* trans Virginia Conant (New York 1943) and *Renaissance Thought* II (New York 1965) 89–101. Ficino's *Opera omnia* have been reprinted in two volumes (Turin 1962). See also Nesca A. Robb *Neoplatonism of the Italian Renaissance* (London 1935); Herbert Grabes *The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titles and Texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance* trans Gordon Collier (Cambridge 1982); and James Hankins *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (Leiden and New York 1990).
- 5 Pamphilus is correct on the diet of ghosts, as we are assured by Charon himself; see 822:31–2. Cf 'Penny-pinching' 982:6.
 - 6 wine, and vinegar] Added in the September 1531 edition. See 'The Godly Feast' 184:17–19.
 - 7 *dormiunt . . . coeunt*. They unite; 'total they mix' (Milton *Paradise Lost* 8.627). On this problem in angelology see C.S. Lewis *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford 1942) 109–11; 112–14 in paperback reprint.
 - 8 Insuperable; *Adagia* I vii 41 LB II 278E
 - 9 Plato *Phaedo* 67D
 - 10 *Adagia* IV viii 98, citing Plato *Philebus* 19E
 - 11 *Adagia* I vii 43 (as in n2 above), and see *Parabolae* CWE 23 221:26–222:5.
 - 12 Plato *Phaedrus* 244A–245B, 254A–255B speaks in such terms of lovers. Erasmus refers to this passage when writing on ecstasy in *Moriae encomium* LB IV 502D–503C / ASD IV-3 192:233–47 / CWE 27 152. Cf Allen Ep 337:485–94 / CWE Ep 337:510–21 and 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin' n33.
 - 13 After the sentence just cited from *Moriae encomium* in the preceding note, Erasmus adds, in what P.O. Kristeller ('Erasmus from an Italian Perspective' *Renaissance Quarterly* 23 [1970] 11) thinks is a 'clear echo' of Ficino's commentary on the *Symposium*, that the ardent lover is no longer 'in' himself but where he loves. This idea occurs elsewhere, for instance in Plutarch *Moralia* 759C–D *Amatorius* and in *Antony* 66.4. See 268:22–5 below; and for a serious exposition of the nature of the soul 'The New Mother' (601:29–605:2).
 - 14 *par pari*; *Adagia* I i 35
 - 15 *Sophistria* 'sophistress' is a feminine form probably borrowed from Plato *Euthydemus* 297C. It is used also at 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' 502:33 and 'The New Mother' 597:41. Both speakers make a show of reasonableness in their arguments, but their allusions to sophistry are appropriate, because the language of romantic love and Neoplatonist fancy is paradox rather than logic. Pamphilus protests that he is 'dead,' since his soul has gone over to Maria, who, as he pretends to believe, does not return his affection. Rejecting his half-serious sentimentalism, Maria retorts that the soul cannot be in two places or persons at once; and how can Pamphilus be dead and alive at the same time? This is the problem and paradox of these lines. In certain other fictions or poems, however, each lover does seem to bear the soul of the other. If this is so, do they exchange souls (and yet preserve identity?) or does each have two souls? Impossible questions, to be resolved only by daring imagination and wit. What poets fond of conceits about the soul do insist is that somehow the lover's soul is with the beloved and vice versa.

- 16 The text here consistently reads *animantis*, but the sense seems to require *amantis*.
- 17 *Adagia* I x 17; cf I x 31, II v 22.
- 18 Melchiorre Zoppio, in his treatise on love (written c 1580, published 1617) argues (following Petrarch) that the lover is active, the beloved passive. See Ruth Kelso *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana 1956) 152. Donne says of the god of love that 'His office was indulgently to fit / Actives to passives. Correspondencie / Only his subject was' ('Love's Deitie' 11–13).
- 19 *Areopagitas grammaticos*. The Areopagus, which met on the hill of Ares in Athens, judged capital cases and had a reputation for severity, inflexibility, and incorruptibility. See *Adagia* I ix 41. Maria suggests that Pamphilus' argument would not stand a chance of persuading competent judges.
- 20 *Amphictyones dialecticos*. Amphictyons are those in the vicinity of temples. The Amphictyonic League was an association of Greek states. Its council, which met at the shrine of Apollo at Delphi and of Demeter near Thermopylae, attempted to settle political differences among members of the league. See *Adagia* III v 31; and cf *De copia* CWE 24 595–7.
- 21 The same judgment is expressed in *De vidua christiana* LB v 752F / CWE 66 234.
- 22 Sorceress who transformed men into the shape of beasts. Hence a symbol of alluring but malevolent power which, if it gains and keeps control of men, causes them to be less than human. The story comes from *Odyssey* 10. See also *Adagia* I viii 29 LB II 310B / CWE 32 140, III iii 1 LB II 774C / CWE 34 268, IV ix 43 LB II 1154C–D.
- 23 Cf n4 above.
- 24 The plant called panacea. See Pliny *Naturalis historia* 25.30. It is mentioned in *Parabola* CWE 23 238:13–15. In the revised edition of *Encomium medicinae* (1529) it is used as the name of a celebrated (perhaps fictitious) physician; ASD I-4 176:232n / CWE 29 43.
- 25 As in n19 above
- 26 The attribute of Zeus (Jupiter)
- 27 Emblem of Neptune
- 28 Emblem of Athena
- 29 See 'The Shipwreck' 355:12–18 and n18.
- 30 Cupid
- 31 When love is mutual, Cupid's darts are not fearsome; see 'The Epithalamium' 524:24–40.
- 32 Smith (*Key* 13) conjectures that mention of Orléans may have some connection with a three-months' residence of Erasmus there in 1500, but we have no evidence.
- 33 The wordplay in the Latin (*nomen . . . omen*) is lost in translation.
- 34 *Aglaius*
- 35 *nomine . . . omine*; see n33 above.
- 36 The description that follows is like that of the bridegroom in 'A Marriage in Name Only' (845:23–7).
- 37 Odious character in the *Iliad* (2.210–77), a byword for ugliness and contumacy; *Adagia* IV iii 80
- 38 If the public hangman (*carnifex*) cut off an ear, the offence must have been a disgraceful one.

- 39 *Adagia* I x 24. Literally 'owes his very life,' alluding to the ancient law that debtors should be cut in pieces; see *CWE* 32 244, 374.
- 40 Personification of vengeance and retribution
- 41 From an anecdote about Aemilius Paulus in Plutarch *Moralia* 141A *Coniugalium praecepta*; also in *Lives* 257B. Erasmus used the saying in *Parabolae* *CWE* 23 167:25–7 and *Apophthegmata* *LB* IV 259F.
- 42 'Cast the dice'; *Adagia* I iv 32 gives many examples.
- 43 *Adagia* I i 76. See 'The Godly Feast' n50.
- 44 Because they were gentle and supposedly amorous birds they were sacred to Venus, who is sometimes shown in art with a pair of them. 'From the right' because that was the lucky side. See Guy de Tervarent *Attributs et symboles dans l'art profane 1459–1600: dictionnaire d'un langage perdu* (Geneva 1958; supplement and index 1964) 'Colombe' 105–6.
- 45 Literally 'from our baby nails' (*a teneris unguiculis*); *Adagia* I vii 52
- 46 On compatibility of temperaments and conditions see *Institutio christiani matrimonii* *LB* v 654E, 658C–664F, 685B–687D.
- 47 Aristotle considered eighteen for the woman and thirty-seven for the man the right ages for marriage (*Politics* 7.16 1335a 27–9). In discussing age and marriage, Erasmus decides that a woman nearing thirty may be the most suitable, for she is still young enough to be healthy and to bear children. (See *Institutio christiani matrimonii* *LB* v 665F–666D.) He emphasizes health, compatibility, and moral maturity. Pamphilus and Maria seem about twenty, but all we know for certain is that they are 'nearly equal' in age. Cf n84 below.
- 48 Pamphilus in this colloquy proposes that he and Maria each speak just three words in the present tense: 'I am yours.' Simple enough – but if they do so, they are married. The essence of this matter (unfortunately in Erasmus' opinion; see *Institutio christiani matrimonii* *LB* v 629A, 630E) was *consensus*, consent. Prior to the mid-sixteenth century, the church did not prescribe any particular formulas or formalities for the expression of consent. While marriages were generally celebrated in the presence of a priest who would bless and solemnize the union, neither he nor any witnesses were legally necessary for the validity of the union. Provided they were not hindered by any impediment, the law said marriage was effected solely by the consent of the parties even though marriages celebrated without the church's intervention were repeatedly declared illicit. Alexander III (1159–81) forbade them under pain of anathema and ordered that matrimonial consent be given in public before juridically capable witnesses. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) required the public proclamation of banns and a number of penalties were included against laity or clergy who would contravene this law. These provisions did not end the problem, because all legislation persisted in acknowledging the validity of 'clandestine marriages' – a term applied to unions for which no objective proof existed except from the contracting parties or to a marriage celebrated before witnesses but without a priest or even to a marriage for which banns had not been announced. Canonists never understood this term to apply to a union simply contracted in the absence of parental knowledge or consent. Apart from a brief allusion in *Compendium vitae* to doubts concerning the status of his parents, and a few remarks in other colloquies ('The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 292:28–32, 'The Old Men's Chat' 454:39–455:2, and

'A Fish Diet' 697:36–9), Erasmus' interest in the subject is that of a Christian moralist and reformer. Wives and children could be abandoned; married men could be ordained while others could live in concubinage while pretending to be secretly married. All proof of the fact of a clandestine marriage rested on the testimony of the spouses themselves. If one of the parties deserted the other and entered a second union publicly and before witnesses, the latter union was judged a true marriage in the external forum because the single testimony of the true spouse was not accepted as sufficient proof. In the case of young people, where the abuse of clandestine marriages was widespread, parents often refused to believe their children and forcibly separated them when informed they had wed secretly. The problem was only resolved in a definitive manner when the universal law for the Latin church was changed during the Council of Trent, which asserted that 'the holy church of God has always detested and prohibited such [ie, clandestine] marriages for the best of reasons.' Without modifying the efficient cause of marriage, which remained always and only the consent of the parties, the disciplinary decree stated that a marital union henceforth had to be contracted 'in open church' (*in facie ecclesiae*) before an authorized priest and at least two or three witnesses in order to be accepted as a valid union. Without this essential formality, the consent of the parties in the future would be juridically inefficacious for the production of the matrimonial bond (session 24 [11 November 1563] Canons on the reform of marriage, chapter 1; Tanner II 755–8).

- 49 *epiphonema*, a rhetorical term (also called acclamation). It is described by Erasmus as 'a final triumphant remark' to a narrative or to the conclusion of an argument, 'cleverly thrown in at the end' (*De copia* CWE 24 629:6–14, 687:13) and used here as a musical trope with 'short song' (*cantiuncula*).
- 50 Don't marry with eyes or fingers; that is, by trusting appearances or counting the dowry (Plutarch *Moralia* 141C *Coniugalia praecepta*).
- 51 *Adagia* II i 54; see 'The Godly Feast' n22.
- 52 Immortality through one's children is an idea emphasized in Rabelais' treatment of marriage (*Gargantua and Pantagruel* 2.8). See M.A. Screech *The Rabelaisian Marriage* (London 1958) and E.V. Telle 'A propos de la lettre de Gargantua à son fils' BHR 19 (1957) 208–33.
- 53 The distinctions made by Pamphilus in the following passage (to 266:10) employ familiar terms but not only in their familiar senses, and the inferences to be drawn may have startled some readers, as we know they offended others. Since 'virginity,' 'chastity,' 'celibacy,' and related terms appear so often in Erasmus' writings on marital and religious subjects, the reader must expect that in different Erasmian contexts the implications or nuances of such words may shift from time to time. In civil and canon law *virginitas*, *castitas*, and *caelibatus* had official or long-established definitions and applications, but it is not always easy to be completely sure of their various meanings when they are met in other contexts. The holiest (*sanctissimum*) kind of life, Erasmus says in one text, is chaste and pure marriage (*Encomium matrimonii* LB I 419D / ASD I-2 417:5 / ASD I-5 402:217–8 / CWE 25 129–45). To emphasize certain convictions about the excellence of Christian marriage he sometimes pronounces 'chaste' marriage tantamount to virginity (*De vidua christiana* LB V 734E–735A / CWE 66 202). Pamphilus predicts that his marriage with Maria will fall 'little short of

virginity.' By a play on words and deliberate conjuncture of terms ordinarily unidentical or even incompatible, Erasmus manages to suggest a thesis about the nature of Christian marriage and to raise some doubts about accepted, traditional notions concerning the comparative values of marriage and celibacy. In this colloquy and the next he does not work out these ideas elaborately. As usual he would be the first to protest (he does so in *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 937D) that this is a dramatic fiction and the speaker an imagined character with a suitor's exuberance, not Erasmus speaking in his own person. Nevertheless it would be easy to show that he took these ideas seriously and more than once expounded or defended them when writing formally on marriage, sacerdotal celibacy, or monasticism.

'Virginity' means the state of not having experienced sexual intercourse. To Erasmus it is a condition of mind as well as body: 'True virginity resides not only in the gift of chastity, but all impurity of the heart is an impairment of this virginity' (*Virginis et martyris comparatio* LB V 593D); there are many virgins who are chaste in the world's regard but unchaste in the Lord's eyes (*De vidua christiana* LB V 744B / CWE 66 218).

'Chastity' in Erasmus' pages, as in English usage, has both absolute and relative meanings. It may denote complete abstinence from sexual activity; depending on the circumstances, therefore, it may be synonymous with 'virginity,' 'celibacy,' or both. Secondly, it can and often does mean purity in the sense of abstinence from unlawful sexual intercourse. In Erasmus' texts perfect chastity in marriage means not only abstinence from all sexual relations outside marriage but also that sexual relations within marriage are solely for the purpose of procreation. Pamphilus wants to marry a chaste woman and live chastely with her. Perfection is not easily or quickly attained. When he adds that 'we'll learn virginity,' as though husband and wife could become virginal even after having had sexual relations in marriage, he speaks figuratively, in a bold paradox, as Maria recognizes. The paradox is effective because it forces the reader to think more sharply about the nature of virginity, and this is what Erasmus intended. What 'we'll learn' is restraint that will lead in time to total abstinence from sexual relations. In the ordinary sense of the words, then, absolute chastity and not virginity will be the state attained. To call this virginity or almost virginity is to exalt marriage, which is part of Erasmus' purpose. Pamphilus makes a similar identification of temperance with abstinence with respect to drinking wine.

If chastity in some contexts means virginity, in others sexual relations sanctioned by Christian marriage for Christian purposes, and in still others exclusion of all sexual relations in marriage after a period in which such sanctioned relations have existed, then there are (only too plainly) possibilities of misunderstandings and ambiguities in the use of the terms by different writers and in the comprehension of their texts by readers. Customary definitions, for instance of chastity as 'the virtue which excludes or moderates the indulgence of the sexual appetite' (NCE III 515), are not always helpful until a reader ascertains from a particular text whether exclusion or moderation is there intended. Erasmus sometimes defines, sometimes does not, and at other times seems satisfied with implying rather than asserting if doing so will help him to score a point.

'Celibacy' is the unmarried state; in a priest or religious, it is the renunciation of marriage. A celibate is one who lives unmarried, whether or not he has a concubine and whether or not he is continent (*Paraphrasis in Elegantias Vallae* LB I

1078E / ASD I-4 232:673–5; cf ‘The Sermon’ 950:18–21). Here again is promise of ambiguity. Perfect celibacy is a life of chastity if indulgence of the sexual appetite is excluded; but a man, say a priest or a monk, may be technically ‘celibate’ because unmarried, yet not ‘chaste’ if his thoughts or actions are impure – if, to take the commonest of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century examples, he lives with a concubine. The reader of Erasmus does well to keep these distinctions in mind. Valla, whose definition of ‘celibate’ was used above, and who was so highly esteemed by Erasmus as an arbiter of Latinity and a textual critic, wrote a dialogue *De voluptate* (1431) in which an advocate of Epicureanism defends sexual liberty and deprecates Christian ideals of virginity (see ‘The Epicurean’ introduction 1071–2). Colet went to the other extreme at times, regretting that there was any marriage at all (‘carnalis autem generatio . . . non est res Christi’) and wishing that the whole of Christendom were celibate, as Paul hoped that ‘all men were even as I’; see *De sacramentis ecclesiae* 7 in *Opera* III 74–6 (Latin) and his lectures on 1 Corinthians 7 in *Opera* II 89–97 (English), 223–9 (Latin); also available in *John Colet’s Commentary on First Corinthians* ed and trans Bernard O’Kelly and Catherine A.L. Jarrott, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 21 (Binghamton 1985).

On some shifts in attitude towards such subjects, particularly in England, see John A. Yost ‘Marriage and Celibacy in Early English Humanism’ *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* new series 57 (1976–7) 1–15.

- 54 Clément Marot turned these lines (to 265:6 below) into French verse in an epithalamium (poem 85:31–40); text in *Oeuvres lyriques* ed C.A. Mayer (London 1964) 311.
- 55 Nature has instilled not only in animate beings but even in plants and herbs a desire of propagating their own kind (Erasmus *Dilutio Clithovei* ed E.V. Telle [Paris 1968] 86).
- 56 A favourite example of fecundity; Virgil *Georgics* 1.2–3, *Eclogues* 5.32; Horace *Epistles* 1.16.3. Cf *Parabola* CWE 23 183:10–12, 264:4–11, 267:1–18. On the literary history of this topos see Peter Demetz ‘The Elm and the Vine’ *PMLA* 73 (1958) 521–32.
- 57 Maria’s question is a reminder that the white rose is a symbol of virginity. Pamphilus in turn introduces the pagan and secular symbol of the rose as the flower of Venus, goddess of love; in this example, of earthly and sensual love. His argument is that of Theseus in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, who when comparing virginity with marriage assures Hermia that

earthlier happy is the rose distilled
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness. (1.1.76–8)

Comus, in Milton’s poem, advises the lady to

be not cosen’d
With that same vaunted name Virginity,
Beauty is natures coyn, must not be hoorded . . .
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languish’t head.
Beauty is natures brag, and must be shown . . . (737–45)

- For other parallels see F. Bruser 'Comus and the Rose Song' (*Studies in Philology* 44 [1947] 625–44). These and many other allusions to the rose in similar contexts are examples of the ancient *carpe diem* theme – 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may' – but the advice from Theseus and Comus is deceptive, intended to serve a bad cause. The argument of Pamphilus' reply, whatever its limitations in logic, is at least an honest expression of feeling.
- 58 Burton *Anatomy of Melancholy* part 1, section 2, memb 2 subs 4 (1 234–5) collects some examples.
- 59 From Erasmus' hero Jerome, and his friend Colet (see n53 [end] above), among many others. Probably the author most frequently quoted on virginity, if we except Paul, was Jerome, who insisted that it is no disparagement of marriage to prefer virginity. For virginity is natural; marriage came only after the Fall. The true praise of marriage is that it produces virgins (Ep 22.19, 20, and passim; this is his famous letter to Eustochium on virginity). In his tractate against Helvidius (c 383), in defence of the perpetual virginity of Mary, and in his attack on Jovinian book 1, he repeats that although he honours marriage he defends virginity as the higher state; it is to marriage as the fruit is to the tree (1.3). Erasmus venerated Jerome more than any of the Latin Fathers, but on this subject of the comparative excellence of marriage and virginity he made judgments of his own, as in *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1031C–1033F. Of the Fathers, Calvin remarks (ICR 4.12.28), only Jerome is so severe on marriage. Text of Ep 22 in PL 22 394–425; for *Adversus Helvidium* see PL 23 (1883) 193–216, for *Adversus Jovinianum* book 1 PL 23 (1883) 221–96; translations in NPNF 2nd series vi.
- 60 'For surely nothing is more unprofitable in the Commonwealth of Nature, than they that dy old maids' (Donne *Juvenilia: or Certaine Paradoxes, and Problemes* 12).
- 61 See Jerome Ep 22.19, 20.
- 62 Cf Allen Ep 858:390–4 / CWE Ep 858:414–16.
- 63 *Encomium matrimonii* LB I 416C–417D / ASD I-2 406:4–409:2 / ASD I-5 390:85–392:113 / CWE 25 132–4
- 64 'Brought up to godliness' is what Erasmus means by offspring produced for a Christian state and for Christ (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1086A).
- 65 This is the 'matrimonium simillimum virginitati' (*Apologia pro declamatione matrimonii* LB IX 109C / CWE 71 93; *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 794F; *Appendix ad antapologiam Sutoris* ibidem 813D). See *Encomium matrimonii* LB I 419D–420A / ASD I-2 417:5 / ASD I-5 402:217–8 / CWE 25 136 and *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 619F–620D. What Pamphilus says in these lines is essentially accurate as an expression of Erasmus' opinion. On Joseph and Mary see *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1085C–1086B.
- 66 Repeated from *Encomium matrimonii* LB I 419D / ASD I-2 417:6–7 / ASD I-5 402:218–9 / CWE 25 137
- 67 When condemning the *Colloquies* in its *Determinatio* of May 1526 (text in *Collectio judiciorum de novis erroribus* ... ed C. du Plessis d'Argentré, 3 vols [Paris 1728–36; repr Brussels 1966] II part 1 47–52), the faculty of theology of Paris made specific objection to several passages in this dialogue (see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* [1532] LB IX 937C–938B). First, it said, by arguing that marriage is superior to virginity, Erasmus outdid Jovinian,

whom Jerome opposed (n59 above). The offensive passages were 264:38 (and what follows) and 265:15–16. The second objection was to 265:26 ('... Virginity to be violated in order to be learned?') – 'words even Epicurus would hesitate to utter!' Third, the faculty cited Pamphilus' comment in 265:37–8 (and what follows) – evidence, it stated, that Erasmus holds conjugal chastity in higher esteem than the chastity of priests and religious. To these criticisms Erasmus replies by asking first with which of the speakers, Pamphilus or Maria, his critics identify him. For it is natural that Pamphilus would depreciate virginity in favour of marriage and that Maria, who intends to be married, would nevertheless counter his impatience. She is unimpressed by his rhetoric about learning virginity through marriage. He adds a comparison about learning temperance by drinking (265:27–8). But, Erasmus says, this is not Epicureanism, as the faculty foolishly asserted, but only common sense. The third objection he dismisses: his detractors take Pamphilus too seriously here, and anyway Pamphilus' remarks are not without merit.

Certain of his Spanish critics too found fault with 265:17–24. Erasmus tells them allowance must be made for Pamphilus' age and ardour and maintains that what is said is both proper and appropriate. Nor are Pamphilus' remarks about chastity and about Joseph and Mary unreasonable. If the conversation of all young lovers were like this one, would the Catholic faith be imperilled? No (*Apologia adversus monachos* [1528] LB IX 1085E–1086B). It did not escape Erasmus that, since Maria is named for the Virgin Mary, his opponents might rashly misconstrue what is said about Joseph and Mary (1085F). By alluding to the possibility of such folly he seeks to forestall it.

- 68 In his note on 1 Cor 7:1, 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman,' Erasmus taxes Jerome with resorting to the kind of either-or argument Pamphilus uses here. Jerome in *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.7 reasons, 'If it is good not to touch her, it is bad to touch her, since bad is contrary to good' (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 685D–F; and see *Responsio adversus febricitantis libellum* LB X 1680E–F).
- 69 1 Cor 7:3. 'Marriage' has advice on such subjects.
- 70 So *Encomium matrimonii* LB I 422C / ASD I-2 424:8–12 / ASD I-5 412:343–7 / CWE 25 142
- 71 Marriage is a sort of kingdom but ought to be very far from a tyranny (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 675D).
- 72 See 'The New Mother' 599:22–605:2.
- 73 Cicero *Paradoxa Stoicorum* 6.49–51; *De officiis* 2.24.87
- 74 *Adagia* II iii 49 gives many sources and analogues. Cf Allen Ep 1347:60–4 / CWE Ep 1347:67–72.
- 75 See 264:36–7 above.
- 76 Repeated from *Encomium matrimonii* LB I 422D / ASD I-2 423:3–6 / ASD I-5 412:353–4 / CWE 25 142; cf 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 289:23–4.
- 77 In 'The New Mother' (594:12–20) the woman denies this.
- 78 The convictions expressed in this paragraph are elaborated in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 708D–709A.
- 79 *Adagia* II iv 20, from Horace *Epistles* 1.2.69–70, a common tag in Renaissance writings on education. Cf *De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 358C / ASD I-2 248:13–14 / CWE 25 34; *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 713B.

80 *Adagia* II i 12

81 After initial resistance More formed and fashioned successfully a young bride who was very different from Maria. See 'Marriage' 314:24–315:36.

82 'I am yours'; see n48 above.

83 Like Homer's 'winged words'; and see Horace *Ars poetica* 390, *Epistles* 1.18.71.

84 Maria politely but firmly refuses. She is too cool-headed, too adroit, to commit herself irrevocably before she and Pamphilus receive parental approval for marriage, as proper young people should do. Maria's defence of 'minority,' however, can only be one of prudence or perhaps misinformation, since this form of legal incapacity did not apply in the case of marriage. The church steadfastly refused to accept that the concept of 'minor' – a period between puberty and majority when the exercise of a person's rights remained dependent upon the authority of his or her parents or guardian – applied in this case.

In Roman law, so long as a girl was under twenty-five she was not yet *sui juris* and the consent of her father had to be obtained. According to the laws of the Germanic peoples, the daughter always remained subject to parental authority and the consent of her father was needed for a *matrimonium plane legitimum*.

Even though the church had to accept or at least tolerate such customs, no pope ever pronounced on the necessity of parental consent; in fact many decretals indirectly rejected the notion that parental permission was required for the validity of marriage by giving the force of law to the doctrine that marriage arises solely from the consent of the parties and that anyone could marry who was not expressly prohibited by law. Church jurisprudence equated the minimum age required for marriage with the age of puberty. Adopting the provisions of Roman law in Justinian which identified legal puberty for a girl as the completion of her twelfth year and for a boy his fourteenth, canon law said they acquired thereby the juridical capacity to wed validly even without the knowledge or consent of their parents – a doctrine supported by Thomas Aquinas (cf *Commentarium in iv libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi* book 4 dist 38, q 1, art 1, quaestiuncula 3, solutio 3, ad 2).

In *Institutio christiani matrimonii*, Erasmus is critical of the existence of clandestine marriages and he has little patience with canonists' arguments over cases; see an important passage in LB v 630E–633B. With Rabelais, who devoted a whole chapter to denouncing clandestine marriage (*Gargantua and Pantagruel* 3.48), Erasmus lamented the fact that the church had not decreed invalid the marriages contracted by children without the knowledge and consent of parents. The church's earlier toleration of clandestine marriage as valid may have come about through its desire to discourage parental tyranny, but the cure proved to be worse than the disease, and Erasmus hoped the church would get rid of the scandal (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 649F–650D).

Notwithstanding a motion at the Council of Trent to alter the existing law in order to make parental consent necessary for the marriage of a boy under eighteen or a girl under sixteen, the church, in the decree on clandestine marriages (n48 above), condemned the opinion that 'marriages contracted by children still at home (*a filiis familias*) without the consent of their parents are null, and that the parents can make them either valid or invalid.'

85 As young couples often are. Jacob waited fourteen years for Rachel, but nowadays a month or two may be too long. See *Ecclesiastes* LB v 1044B–C.

- 86 *Adagia* II ii 89; literally 'Your harvest is still in the blade'
- 87 In another colloquy a kiss does play a part in robbing a young woman of her virginity; see 'Marriage' 319:13–14.
- 88 Two others, in fact. As Erasmus writes elsewhere, if a man says to a woman 'If you take me as your husband, give me a kiss' and she does so, they are married (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 631A). The second reason is explained in lines 22–5.
- 89 Maria's pleasantry about the soul leaving the lover's body in a kiss is a riposte worthy of her and an appropriate ending to the debate. Concealed within her reply, as some readers would have recognized, is a set of loosely related ideas or sentiments theological, philosophical, and amatory that had become fashionable in Renaissance literature. These came by indirection from imagery in ancient sources (including the Song of Solomon, Plato, and Gellius), medieval mystical writings, and tales of courtly love. Ficino is credited with having done much to interpret and enhance them in his commentary on Plato's *Symposium*. The origin of conceits connecting kissing with the movement of souls, however, is not satisfactorily identified. Ficino's concerns were theology and philosophy, and religious rather than erotic ecstasy. When Pico della Mirandola writes of the uniting of the lover's soul with that of Venus, he means the celestial and not the earthly Venus. But when secular poets, first Italian and then others, and prose writers too, especially Castiglione, begin to use the conceit of 'soul-kiss,' we come in due time to such famous lines as these in Marlowe's *Faustus* (scene 13 in the 1604 text):

Sweete Helen, make me immortall with a kisse:
 Her lips suckes forth my soule, see where it flies:
 Come Helen, come give mee my soule againe.
 Here wil I dwel, for heaven be in these lips.

Many other examples are collected in Nicholas J. Perella *The Kiss Sacred and Profane* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1969), a valuable study with full references to sources. It does not mention 'Courtship,' though, and Erasmus appears in it only once, as author of an only too familiar passage on English kissing (Ep 103:17–25 / CWE Ep 103:19–30); on this see the introduction to 'The Lover of Glory.'

THE GIRL WITH NO INTEREST IN MARRIAGE

Virgo μισόγαμος

First printed in the August 1523 edition, preceded by the names of the two speakers but without title or identifying running head. The present title was added in the March 1529 edition.

This colloquy, developing themes briefly treated earlier in 'Patterns' (20:38–21:27 above), raises questions that were not only important in Reformation controversies but had involved Erasmus himself. Since questions of monastic versus secular life come up many times in one form or another in the later colloquies, what is said in this introductory note will be pertinent to certain other dialogues in this volume as well. If for example we perceive that the effect of Erasmus' depreciation of monasticism, however closely qualified his criticism may seem, is a denial of customary assumptions about the antecedent spiritual superiority of celibacy over marriage, we can compare more profitably 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' with 'Courtship,' 'Marriage,' and other colloquies. If we remember that Erasmus lived outside the cloister, though he was a professed Augustinian canon, we may find that this circumstance helps to clarify many of his commentaries and controversies. At the least we shall understand better why he and his *Colloquies* seemed a scandal to many of the orthodox. The views of Eubulus in the present dialogue, whether explicit or implied, are typical of Erasmus. They start from assumptions and reach conclusions often met in his more formal treatises or essays.

Erasmus' writings on the nature and meaning of Christian marriage and his treatment of sacerdotal celibacy are two sides of the same large question and for the most part express consistent doctrines. While those doctrines, like the related ones on ceremonies and 'Judaism' (see 'The Godly Feast' 188:8–41 and n157, 196:3–39 and nn219–220) may have developed gradually, many of the presuppositions are evident in the first version of *Enchiridion* (1503) and the rest in works published prior to the 1518 edition of *Enchiridion*. They culminate in his *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (1526). The history of Erasmus' thought and writings on matrimony are treated elaborately by Telle *Erasme et le septième sacrement*, a book severely critical of Erasmus for having denigrated monasticism and exalted marriage.

True celibacy and perpetual virginity (a 'rare gift'; *De vidua christiana* LB v 734A) Erasmus regarded as beyond question highly laudable yet extremely demanding ideals: precious if preserved for authentically spiritual reasons but otherwise not preferable to marriage. 'Angelica res est virginitas. At

humana quaedam res est coniugium' (*De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 419F / ASD I-2 418:11–12 / ASD I-5 404:226 / CWE 25 137–8). So he wrote in an early *Encomium matrimonii* composed, he says, some twenty years before it was printed in 1518 (Allen Ep 604:10n). We do not know whether or how much the text was revised in the interval between composition and first printing. From August 1522 on, this *Encomium* was included with *De conscribendis epistolis*. There he suggests that 'if circumstances required it,' priests and even monks should be allowed to marry (LB I 419E / ASD I-2 418:1–3 / ASD I-5 402:224–404:226 / CWE 25 137). In 1526 he adds 'if it seems expedient to authorities' (*Appendix de scriptis Jodoci Clithovei* LB IX 814A). In 1525 he wrote to the town council of Basel that he would permit unworthy priests to marry their concubines but compel such priests to become laymen; to worthy priests and monks he would permit marriage but would not compel them to abandon the priesthood (Allen Ep 1539:143–50 / CWE Ep 1539:152–60). On this question see also 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n6 and the annotations on 1 Cor 7:1 and 1 Tim 3:2 (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 685F, 934C). Erasmus emphasizes that *Encomium matrimonii* was written as a rhetorical exercise, a *declamatio* of the type called *suasoria* (*Apologia pro declamatione matrimonii* LB IX 105E–112A, 811F–814E / CWE 71 89–95) and should be judged as such. (In *De conscribendis epistolis* it is followed by a short *dissuasio* pointing out some disadvantages of marriage; LB I 414D–416A / ASD I-2 429:4–432:14 / CWE 25 145–8). Even though the ostensible rhetorical character and purpose of the *suasoria* might warn us against attaching too much significance to it, we have more than enough writing on the same subject by Erasmus to assure us that its main arguments may be taken seriously. They agree with those in the more elaborate and unquestionably serious treatment in the *Institutio christiani matrimonii* of 1526.

To Erasmus, it is hardly necessary to say, marriage is the sensible, practical mode of life for most persons, besides being obviously the only way Christians can cohabit without sin. It is a spiritually beneficial state (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 692E; on mystical analogies LB V 622D–623A). Notable in his pages is insistence that sacerdotal and monastic celibacy is not, in itself, productive of a higher spiritual state than is Christian marriage and that neither Christ nor the apostles enjoined any rule about celibacy (*De esu carniū* LB IX 1201C), an assertion implying rejection of common ecclesiastical interpretation of Matt 19:10–12. Erasmus professes admiration for those 'religious' who are virginal in thought and conduct for the kingdom of heaven's sake, but notes that this condition is rare and that many supposed celibates are not such at all (*Appendix de scriptis Jodoci Clithovei* LB IX 814A; *De esu carniū* LB IX 1201B). Since the facts were well known, why pretend

that concubinage is preferable to marriage for them (*De esu carnum* LB IX 1201A–1202A)? Whatever the merits or inadequacies of this reasoning, there is no doubt that Erasmus meant what he said. As for becoming a nun, Eubulus tells Catharine, 'the question is merely one of changing dress, of a way of life that in itself is neither good nor bad' (291:32–4 below); for a longer exposition of this theme see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 476:2–482:14. No wonder such pronouncements, whether voiced in dramatic dialogues or in essays, met with indignant opposition in some quarters.

Another of Erasmus' writings concerning marriage and monasticism is now generally available for the first time since the sixteenth century. This is his *Dilutio eorum quae Iodocus Clithoveus scripsit adversus declamationem suasoriam matrimonii* (1532). The *Dilutio* – not to be confused with Erasmus' brief *Appendix de scriptis Iodoci Clithovei* in LB IX 811–14 – constitutes a second part of the *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* (1532). The date of composition is uncertain. It was issued separately by Froben in 1532, but for unaccountable reasons was not printed in the *Erasmi opera omnia* of 1538–40 or in LB. There is a good edition by E.V. Telle (Paris 1968). Josse Clichtove, a busy Parisian scholar and theologian, was long a follower of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples but later strongly opposed Luther and those whom he thought dangerous because of their Lutheran sympathies. Among these was Louis de Berquin, who translated Erasmus' *Encomium matrimonii*, *Querela pacis*, *Modus orandi Deum*, and most of *Inquisitio de fide* into French. He was condemned by the faculty of theology in Paris (May 1525), imprisoned, and finally burned as a relapsed heretic in April 1529. See M.M. Phillips *Erasme et les débuts de la Réforme française 1517–1536* (Paris 1934) and 'Charon' n37. Erasmus had found him increasingly difficult to advise and could do nothing to help him, but mourned his fate. It was too bad, he once remarked, that Berquin did not take the trouble to translate his *dissuasio* against matrimony as well as his praise of it (Allen Ep 1581:756–8 / CWE Ep 1581: 842–4)! On Berquin's career see Allen Ep 925:13n; Telle *Erasme et le septième sacrement* 329–45; Charles Garside Jr 'Humanism, Heresy, and the Sorbonne' *Rice University Studies* 60 no 4 (1974) 45–82; and CEBR. Berquin's enthusiasm for reform increased Clichtove's antipathy to Erasmus. As a defender of monasticism (*De laude monasticae religionis* [1513]) and foe of Luther, Clichtove was understandably outraged by Erasmus' criticism of monasticism and attacked him as well as Luther in *Propugnaculum ecclesiae* (1526). Subsequently Erasmus' *Dilutio* in defence of his opinions elaborated what he had written in the *Appendix*.

On Clichtove consult J.-P. Massaut *Josse Clichtove, l'humanisme et la réforme du clergé* 2 vols (Paris 1968); on *Encomium matrimonii*, II 188–99. The summary notice, with bibliography, in CEBR is also by Massaut. Farge *Paris Doctors* must not be overlooked.

Erasmus' own monastic experiences formed a chapter of his life for which most of the evidence comes from his own pen and therefore should be treated with caution. The whole and exact truth about his monastic years we cannot know. See R.L. DeMolen 'Erasmus' Commitment to the Canons Regular of St. Augustine' in *The Spirituality of Erasmus* (Nieuwkoop 1987) 191–8. Consciously or not, he sometimes read the present into the past, setting down without qualification as facts certain things he wanted to believe and doubtless had persuaded himself were so. He says for instance, in a letter written in July 1514 to the prior, that he had been cajoled into entering the Augustinian priory at Steyn (1487), led by false promises, and that he had no true vocation for the monastic life (Allen Ep 296:12–27 / CWE Ep 296:12–28 and passim). He was professed an Augustinian canon regular in 1488 and lived at Steyn until 1492 (the year in which he was ordained priest) or 1493. If indeed he did not realize when he entered the priory that he had no vocation, he discovered this disturbing truth while there and afterwards insisted on it as often as occasion demanded. What is not so clear is that his experience at Steyn was as unhappy as in later years he liked to maintain. But whatever the reasons – lack of deep spirituality, boredom with routine, literary ambitions – he tired of the life, rejoiced to leave it, and came to abhor the thought of ever resuming it. Replying many years later to a charge of apostasy, he argued that although canons living according to monastic rule are monks, this standard does not apply to him: 'I never was a monk. It is voluntary, not enforced profession that makes the monk.' These words allude to his being pressed to enter the monastery when he was too young and too ignorant to be aware of what the commitment would mean. Therefore, he adds, such a profession as his is not inflexible, because a 'voluntary' decision by one who lacks judgment and an involuntary act amount to the same thing (Allen Ep 1436:19–24 / CWE Ep 1436:20–5). He wrote this less than a year after publication of the present colloquy. It may sound like quibbling, but Erasmus stood by it. What cannot be doubted is that for most of his mature life he was decidedly critical, at times almost obsessively so, of monks and monasticism. Good monks were ornaments of the church, but these, he feared, were rare, outnumbered by others who were cankers (*Supputatio* LB IX 647D–E; *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* ibidem 894D; *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* ibidem 1147A–1152B). But he did not condemn the whole institution; he deplored its gross evils. Even in the *Colloquies* ('The Soldier and the Carthusian' and 'The Well-to-do Beggars,' for example) he has some favourable things to say about monks and friars. He wrote a memoir of a Franciscan he admired (Allen Ep 1211:13–243 / CWE Ep 1211:16–273) and more than once defended monasticism from the most extreme attacks of Lutherans. In 1527 he tried to dissuade a Carthusian from leaving the cloister (Ep 1887). Nevertheless his

criticism of monasticism was of so many years' standing, and so trenchant, that it was, and is, much better known than his defence of it.

A cross-section of his opinions can be found in certain colloquies written between 1522 and 1531: besides the two just named, 'The Shipwreck,' 'The Old Men's Chat,' 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady,' 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake,' 'A Fish Diet,' 'The Funeral,' 'The Sermon,' 'The Seraphic Funeral.' In *De contemptu mundi*, an essay in the form of a letter (LB v 1239E-1262F / ASD v-1 39-86 / CWE 66 129-75), written perhaps as early as c 1486, he praises monastic life as offering every prospect of a Christian 'Epicureanism,' the kind of existence enjoyed by the Carthusian in 'The Soldier and the Carthusian.' Eleven chapters describe the tranquillity of the cloister, but in the twelfth and final chapter the author warns emphatically that nowadays monasteries are no longer havens of peace and virtue and that many who enter them do so from unworthy motives and henceforth lead idle, useless, dissipated lives (LB v 1261C-1262F / ASD v-1 82-6 / CWE 66 172-5). When this final chapter was written is not known – possibly not long before the publication of *De contemptu mundi* in 1521. The inconsistency of argument and tone between chapters 1-11 and chapter 12 seems puzzling at first. Scholars incline to account for it in accordance with their general interpretations of Erasmus' character. Many, or most, think the additional chapter a deliberate refutation of the preceding ones: Erasmus could not call in the first eleven chapters, so in effect he cancelled their argument by the new chapter, which contains his more mature opinions. He says in 1521 that *De contemptu mundi* was written *exercendi stili gratia* 'for practice in writing,' at the request of a man who hoped to induce his nephew to enter a monastery. Nor did Erasmus intend to publish it, he adds, but does so now because he has heard that someone who got hold of a copy means to print it (Ep 1194). One critic, dismissing this explanation as an improbable fiction, holds that Erasmus had been sincere enough when, many years earlier, he wrote chapters 1-11, but by the time he wrote chapter 12 was so hostile to monasticism that he did not hesitate to invent a clumsy story about the work (Albert Hyma *The Youth of Erasmus* [Ann Arbor 1920] 167-81). But he had been critical of monasticism long before 1521, for example when he wrote in *Enchiridion* (1503) that monasticism is not devotion (*pietas*) but a way of life, profitable or unprofitable as it fits one's physical and moral health (LB v 65C / Holborn 135:8-9 / CWE 66 127). His assertion in Ep 1194 that *De contemptu mundi* was a rhetorical composition must be taken seriously though not unreservedly. Whatever is thought of its arguments for and against the monastic life, the judgments expressed in chapter 12 are certainly representative of opinions held by Erasmus both before and after 1521. Furthermore the recent discovery, reported in 1981, of a manuscript

draft of *De contemptu mundi* written between c 1502 and 1513 is important because that draft lacks the final chapter. If this fact means that the chapter was indeed a later addition, the supposition that it was autobiographical, and not a mere rhetorical flourish, is strengthened. See Marcel Haverals 'Une première rédaction du "De contemptu mundi" d'Erasmus dans un manuscrit de Zwolle' *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 30 (1981) 40–54 and CWE 66 131.

Among Erasmus' letters is a long one (Ep 447), written in 1516 but not printed until 1529, addressed to 'Grunnius.' In this document, which is of central importance to biographers, the history of one Florentius (Erasmus) is set forth for the purpose of obtaining a papal dispensation from certain canonical requirements concerning monastic dress and enclosure. In 1506 Erasmus received a dispensation from Pope Julius II (Allen III xxix / CWE Ep 187A) to allow him to hold a (single) secular benefice, although he was a religious. He later claimed (Allen Ep 296:185–8 / CWE Ep 296:196–9) that the dispensation allowed him to abandon the habit of the canons, which it did not. Accordingly, he applied to Pope Leo X for a further dispensation to allow him to hold a plurality of benefices, and for habilitation after the technical charge of apostasy which he had incurred by adopting (as early as 1506) the habit of a secular priest. In the letter to Grunnius we have his version of his monastic experience. This narrative contains some harsh observations on monks and monasticism. How accurate it is in all respects is debatable, but it shows us what Erasmus wrote for the pope's eyes on this subject. It was successful for the most part: Erasmus was granted the hoped-for concessions on dress and benefices by Leo X (1517); but he was not released from his canonical vows. The documents, difficulties, and decisions involved in this matter furnish interesting illustrations of contemporary discipline and administration in the church. See Epp 296, 446, 447, 517, 518, and particularly the introductions to these letters by J.K. McConica in CWE.

In 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' and its continuation, 'The Repentant Girl,' we have a scene painted in strong colours: a young, innocent creature who enters a convent, in spite of efforts by parents and suitor to dissuade her, quickly recognizes her mistake. The same edition in which these dialogues were first printed offers what seems a very different picture, 'The Soldier and the Carthusian.' There the monastery is a place of sweetness and light. The Carthusian is happy because he knew what he was doing when he joined; he had not entered the monastery until he was of mature years and had long deliberated.

Because so many of Erasmus' writings, whether colloquies, commentaries, treatises, homilies, or letters, include controversial passages on monastic topics, dependence on one colloquy or one book alone for his judgments of monasticism might be unwise. Nevertheless the *Colloquies* reflect accurately,

if informally, his recurrent complaints, prejudices, and convictions about monasticism and the mendicant orders. If, after reading all these dialogues and making sufficient allowance for their dramatic structure and satiric exaggeration, we retain a strong impression of sloth, ignorance, and worldliness as conditions prevalent among monks and friars, this is because Erasmus wished to stress those weaknesses and had the artistic skill to do so. He did not condemn monasticism unconditionally, nor did he call for its abolition; he always insisted that he wanted to reform it. But about the general effect of his pages on monasticism there can be little doubt. Except in chapters 1–11 of *De contemptu mundi* the temper of those pages is steadily critical and often hostile. The abiding impression they leave is that monasticism as an institution has lost much of its inspiration, that monks are too idle, and that spirituality can be attained just as surely in the vocation of a pious layman as in a cloister.

For additional information on *De contemptu mundi* see the introductions to Sem Dresden's edition in ASD v-1 12–36 and to Erika Rummel's edition in CWE 66 130–3; Bainton *Erasmus of Christendom* 13–17; on the text J.-P. Massaut 'La nouvelle édition des *Opera omnia* d'Erasme' ARG 69 (1978) 303–4; for a source previously overlooked see Erika Rummel 'Quoting Poetry instead of Scripture: Erasmus and Eucherius on *contemptus mundi*' BHR 45 (1983) 503–9. On *Encomium matrimonii* see J.-C. Margolin's edition in ASD I-5 335–416. Erasmus' comments in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' (1101:36–1102:6), printed in 1526, show that he did not change his mind on monks and monasticism. Both *De contemptu mundi* and *Encomium matrimonii* were translated into English, the first by Thomas Paynell in 1533 (STC 10471; repr with introduction by W.J. Hirten [Gainesville, Florida 1967]), the second by Richard Taverner c 1531 (STC 10492). A French version of this colloquy by Clément Marot was published c 1548; text in *Traductions* ed C.A. Mayer (Geneva 1980) 267–97.

EUBULUS,¹ CATHARINE

Eubulus I'm glad dinner's finally over, so that we may enjoy this walk. There's nothing more pleasant.

5 **Catharine** I'm glad too. I was tired of sitting so long.

Eubulus How green and smiling the world is everywhere! This is its youthful season, surely.

Catharine So it is.

Eubulus But why isn't *your* springtime equally bright?

10 **Catharine** Why do you say that?

Eubulus Because you're rather sad.

Catharine Do I look different?

Eubulus Want me to show you how you look?

Catharine Very much.

Eubulus See this rose,² with its petals partially drawn in at dusk?

5 **Catharine** I do. What of it?

Eubulus That's what you look like.

Catharine A fine comparison!

Eubulus If you doubt me, take a look at yourself in this little fountain. – Just what was the meaning of so many sighs during dinner?

10 **Catharine** Stop asking about what doesn't concern you.

Eubulus Oh, but it very much concerns me. I can't be cheerful unless I see you're cheerful too. But there: another sigh! My, what a deep one!

Catharine Something torments me, but it's not safe to tell what.

Eubulus You won't tell me, when I love you more than my own sister? Don't
15 be afraid, Catharine dear; whatever's the trouble, you can trust it safely to these ears.³

Catharine I'm safe in saying that I fear there's no use telling it to one who can't help.

Eubulus How do you know? If I can't help in the business itself, maybe I
20 can give comfort and advice.

Catharine I can't talk about it.

Eubulus What *is* the matter? Do you hate me?

Catharine Hate you! So much that my own brother is less dear to me. And yet my heart won't let me speak.

25 **Eubulus** Then will you admit it if I guess? Why are you evasive? Promise, or I won't stop urging you.

Catharine All right – I promise.

Eubulus I simply don't see what you lack to make you perfectly happy.

Catharine If only what you say were true!

30 **Eubulus** In the first place, you're in the bloom of youth, for if I'm not mistaken you're now in your seventeenth year.⁴

Catharine That's correct.

Eubulus So I suppose fear of old age doesn't torture you as yet.

Catharine Nothing troubles me less.

35 **Eubulus** You're blessed by beauty in every respect, and that's a special gift of God.

Catharine Of my beauty, such as it is, I neither boast nor complain.

Eubulus Then, your complexion and figure suggest you enjoy good health, unless you've some latent disease.

40 **Catharine** Nothing of that sort, thank God.

Eubulus Your reputation is unstained.

Catharine I trust it is.

Eubulus You're blessed with a wit worthy of your beauty. I wish I had your aptitude for the liberal arts.

Catharine If I have any, it's the gift of God.

5 **Eubulus** And you've charming manners, which are often hard to find even in the most favoured beauties.

Catharine Certainly I hope my conduct does me credit.

Eubulus Many persons are ashamed of an unfortunate family tree. Your parents are well born, highly respectable, prosperous, and devoted
10 to you.

Catharine I've no complaint on that score.

Eubulus Why beat about the bush? Of all the girls in this neighbourhood, there's none I'd rather marry if my lucky star would shine.

Catharine And I'd choose no other husband if marriage had any attraction
15 for me.

Eubulus And yet it must be something very important that makes you so unhappy.

Catharine It's nothing trivial.

Eubulus You won't be angry if I guess it?

20 **Catharine** I've already promised.

Eubulus I know by experience how awful a torment love is. – Come, now, confess: you promised.

Catharine There's love involved, but not the kind you suspect.

Eubulus What kind are you talking about?

25 **Catharine** Guess.

Eubulus Well, I've used up all my guessing. But I won't let go of this hand until I've wrung an answer from you.

Catharine How insistent you are!

Eubulus Whatever this trouble is, confide it to me.

30 **Catharine** Since you urge me so, I'll tell you. From earliest childhood I've had a marvellous longing.⁵

Eubulus What is it, I ask you?

Catharine To join a community of holy virgins.

Eubulus To become a nun?

35 **Catharine** Yes.

Eubulus Huh! Coals instead of treasure!⁶

Catharine What's that you say, Eubulus?

Eubulus Nothing, darling; I was clearing my throat. But go on.

Catharine My parents always resisted this longing of mine with the utmost
40 firmness.⁷

Eubulus I'm listening.

Catharine On the other hand, I opposed their parental sense of duty with entreaties, coaxings, and tears.

Eubulus A pretty state of affairs!

- Catharine** At last, when I wouldn't stop begging, swearing, vowing, and weeping, they promised that when I reached my seventeenth year they would give in to my wish if my mind were still set on it.⁸ That year has come; my resolution remains the same; but my parents back out of the agreement and won't consent. It's this that breaks my heart.

I've shown you my hurt; now heal it if you can.

- Eubulus** First, my sweet, I'll give you this advice: control your desires, and if you don't get what you want, want what you can get.⁹

Catharine I'd rather die than not have my wish.

Eubulus And precisely where did you get this fatal desire?

- Catharine** Once when I was still a little girl I was taken to a certain convent. We made a tour of the place and saw everything. The nuns delighted me with their shining faces: they seemed angels.¹⁰ Everything in the church was beautiful and fragrant too; the well-trimmed gardens were in full bloom. What more need I say? Wherever I looked, everything I saw attracted me. The perfectly charming conversation of the nuns added to these impressions. I found there one or two whom I used to play with as a child. – From that hour my heart began to burn with longing for this life.

- Eubulus** I'm not going to say a word against the order of nuns – though not all modes of life are equally suitable to all persons¹¹ – but considering your particular temperament, which I think I've inferred from your looks and behaviour, I'd urge you to marry a husband of similar tastes and establish a new community at home. Your husband would be the father of it, you the mother.¹²

Catharine I'd rather die than give up my resolution of virginity.

- Eubulus** Virginity's an excellent thing if pure and undefiled,¹³ but there's no need on this account to hand yourself over to an order that you can't get out of afterwards. You may preserve your virginity at home with your parents.

Catharine Yes, but not so safely.

- Eubulus** On the contrary, sometimes more safely, in my judgment, than among those gross monks who are always puffy from overeating.¹⁴ They're not geldings, for your information.¹⁵ 'Fathers' they're called, and this name they often take care to deserve. In the old days, virgins lived nowhere more chastely than with their parents and had no other 'father' than the bishop.¹⁶ But do please tell me: of all the orders, which one have you chosen to sentence yourself to?

Catharine The Chrysercian.¹⁷

Eubulus I'm acquainted with it – near your home.

Catharine That's right.

Eubulus I know the whole lot of them very well – a fine set indeed to renounce father and mother and a decent family circle for! The prior has
5 been out of his head this long while, what with old age, drink,¹⁸ and his own natural character. Wine's the only subject *he* knows. He has two brethren worthy of him, John and Jodocus. Of these, John, though perhaps not a bad man, has no manhood about him except his beard; not a single shred of learning, and not much more common sense. Jodocus is so stupid that if he
10 weren't protected by his sacred habit he'd walk about in public in a fool's hood with flapping ears and tinkling bells.¹⁹

Catharine They seem highly respectable men to me.

Eubulus I know them better than you do, my dear Catharine. Maybe they patronize you in the presence of your parents in order to convert
15 you.

Catharine Jodocus is especially cordial.

Eubulus That flatterer!²⁰ But even supposing they're good and learned men now, they'll be ignorant and vicious tomorrow; and whatever they turn out to be, you'll have to put up with them.

Catharine At home I'm embarrassed by the numerous dinner parties. The married folks' talk there isn't always fit for girls' ears, either. And it happens sometimes that I can't refuse a kiss.²¹

Eubulus The person who tries to avoid any embarrassment whatever had better quit this life.²² You must accustom yourself to hearing everything but
25 admitting only the good into your mind. Your parents allow you a room of your own, I imagine?

Catharine Of course.

Eubulus You can retire to that if a dinner party becomes too boisterous. And while they're drinking and joking, do you converse with your bridegroom,
30 Christ;²³ pray, sing psalms, give thanks. Your parental home won't stain you, but you'll make it more pure.

Catharine Yet to be in a community of virgins is safer.

Eubulus I've nothing to say against a chaste community, but I wouldn't want you to be deceived by vain fancies. When you've spent some time there
35 and have seen it at closer range, perhaps everything won't be as dazzling as it once seemed. All the veiled aren't virgins, believe me.

Catharine Say something good, please.

Eubulus True words are good words, assuredly – unless, perhaps, the praise hitherto deemed appropriate to the Virgin Mother has passed to many
40 others, so that they too may be termed virgins after childbearing.

Catharine God forbid!

Eubulus What's more, not everything's virginal among those virgins in other respects, either.

Catharine No? Why not, if you please?

Eubulus Because there are more who copy Sappho's behaviour than share her talent.²⁴

Catharine I don't quite understand what you mean.

Eubulus And I say these things in order that the time may not come when you do understand, my dear Catharine.

Catharine But my mind's made up, and from the fact that this disposition
10 has continued so many years and grown more ardent from day to day I conclude it comes from God.

Eubulus On the contrary, the very fact that your worthy parents oppose it so strongly makes me dubious about this disposition of yours. If what you're attempting were right, God would have inspired their minds too. But this
15 inspiration you drew from the elegance you saw when still a little girl, from the flattering addresses of the nuns, from affection for old friends, from the sacred rites, from the only too ostentatious ceremonies, from the shameless urgings of fatuous monks, who are after you in order to drink deeper. They know your father is kind and generous. They'll entertain him – but on condition he
20 bring enough wine with him to satisfy ten nimble sots; or else they'll drink at his house. Hence I'd advise you not to embark on any new course against the wishes of parents, who have authority over us by God's will.²⁵

Catharine In this case it's right to disregard father and mother.²⁶

Eubulus In some situations it's right to disregard father and mother for the
25 sake of Christ. For a Christian to abandon his pagan father who is solely dependent on him for support, and allow him to starve, would not be right. If you had not yet professed Christ in baptism and your parents forbade you to be baptized, you would do right to prefer Christ to unrighteous parents.²⁷ Or if your parents were now driving you to wrongdoing and infamy, their
30 authority ought to be spurned.

But what has this to do with a convent? You have Christ at home as well. Natures teaches, God commands,²⁸ Paul admonishes,²⁹ human ordinances decree that children obey their parents.³⁰ And will you withdraw yourself
35 from the authority of excellent parents for the purpose of giving yourself over to a spurious instead of a true father, and adopting another mother in place of your real one? Or rather, adopt masters and mistresses in place of parents? You're subject to parents, true, but all the same they want you to be free. And that's why sons of a household are called *liberi*³¹ – because their condition is different from that of slaves.

40 Now you intend to surrender your freedom voluntarily and become a slave.³² Christian compassion has, for the most part, abolished all of the

slavery characteristic of the ancient world save for a few remnants here and there.³³ But under pretence of religion a new kind of servitude has been devised, such as now undoubtedly exists in most monasteries.³⁴ Nothing is to be permitted there except by rule; whatever comes *your* way will be added
 5 unto *them*; if you stir a foot you'll be dragged back from flight as though you had poisoned a parent.³⁵ To make the servitude more evident they change the dress given to you by parents³⁶ and – like ancient slave-dealers – change the name bestowed on you in baptism; and instead of Peter or John they call one Francis or Dominic or Thomas.³⁷ Peter pledged his name
 10 to Christ; now, on becoming a Dominican, he's called Thomas. If a man under military discipline throws off the uniform given by his commander, he appears to have rejected that commander. Yet we applaud the person who accepts a garment that Christ, the Lord of all men, did not confer,³⁸ and who, if this garment is changed, is punished³⁹ more severely than if he
 15 discarded a hundred times the garb of his Lord and Master⁴⁰ – that is, purity of heart.

Catharine But if one enters into this servitude of one's own free will, the action is said to be exceptionally meritorious.

Eubulus That's a truly pharisaical doctrine.⁴¹ Paul teaches the contrary – that
 20 he who is called free should not wish to become a slave but rather endeavour to be free.⁴² Besides, your slavery is the more unfortunate because you must serve many masters, because for the most part they are foolish and vicious,⁴³ because they are constantly changing and there are often new ones. Answer me this: do the laws release you from the jurisdiction of your parents?

25 **Catharine** Not at all.

Eubulus May you buy or sell property without the consent of your parents?

Catharine Of course not.⁴⁴

Eubulus What right have you, then, to give yourself away to I know not
 30 whom without parental consent? Aren't you their very nearest and dearest possession?

Catharine In a matter of religion⁴⁵ natural laws lose their force.

Eubulus The question of religion is most urgent in baptism. Here the question is merely one of changing dress, of a way of life that in itself is neither good nor bad.⁴⁶ Consider how many advantages you lose along with
 35 your freedom. Now you're free to read,⁴⁷ pray, sing God's praises in your own room as much as you like and whenever you like. If you become tired of your room you may listen to church music,⁴⁸ attend divine service, hear sermons. And if you see some lady or unmarried woman of outstanding moral excellence, you can improve yourself by her conversation; if some man
 40 endowed with unusual virtue, you can learn from him what might improve you. You're free also to select the preacher who teaches the purest Christian

doctrine.⁴⁹ All these things, which do most to draw you to true godliness, you lose once for all when you enter a convent.

Catharine But then I shan't be a nun.

Eubulus Names still move you? Ponder this matter carefully. These people
 5 brag about obedience.⁵⁰ Will that praise be lacking to you if you obey your
 parents, whom God bids you obey? If you obey your bishop and your pastor?
 Or praise for poverty, when all you have is in your parents' hands? Though
 in ancient times the generosity of nuns to the poor was especially praised
 by holy men, they couldn't have practised that generosity had they been
 10 penniless. Your chastity, moreover, is not impaired even if you do live with
 your parents. So what remains?⁵¹ The veil, linen clothing inside and out,⁵²
 certain rites that by themselves⁵³ contribute nothing to religion and do not
 commend anyone in the sight of Christ, who regards only purity of heart.

Catharine A strange gospel you preach!

Eubulus But an absolutely true one. Since you're not emancipated from
 15 the authority of your parents, since you've no legal right to sell clothes or
 field,⁵⁴ how do you contrive the right to give yourself into bondage under
 somebody else?

Catharine They say the authority of parents is no impediment⁵⁵ to entering
 20 religion.⁵⁶

Eubulus Didn't you profess religion when you were baptized?⁵⁷

Catharine I did.

Eubulus Whoever follow the teachings of Christ are religious, aren't they?

Catharine Of course.

Eubulus Then what's this new religion that abrogates what the law of nature
 25 sanctioned,⁵⁸ the Old Law taught,⁵⁹ the law of the gospel approved, and
 apostolic teaching confirmed? This decree was not made known by God but
 devised in a council of monks.⁶⁰ Thus some determine also that marriage
 between a boy and girl, without the parents' knowledge and even contrary
 30 to their wishes, is valid if contracted through 'words in the present tense'⁶¹
 (for so they call them). But this edict is ratified neither by common sense,
 ancient laws, Mosaic law, nor by evangelical or apostolic teaching.

Catherine Then you think it's not right for me to become the bride of Christ
 except with parental approval?

Eubulus You've already 'married' Christ,⁶² I tell you, and so have we all.⁶³
 Who marries the same husband twice? This is only a question of place, dress,
 and rites.⁶⁴ I don't believe the authority of parents ought to be slighted on
 account of these things. And you must take care lest, while intending to
 marry Christ, you marry others.

Catharine But these men declare nothing is more holy than to disregard
 40 parents in this matter.⁶⁵

Eubulus Ask those doctors⁶⁶ to show you some passage in Sacred Scripture that teaches this. If they can't do so, tell them to go drink a cup of Beaune wine⁶⁷ – that they *can* do. To flee⁶⁸ from unrighteous parents to Christ is a sacred duty.⁶⁹ But what sacred duty is it, pray, to flee from good parents to the monastic life, which often means from good to bad? And yet even in ancient times a man converted from paganism to Christ owed respect to his idolatrous parents so far as this was possible without damage to his religion.⁷⁰

Catharine Do you condemn the whole monastic life, then?⁷¹

- 10 **Eubulus** By no means. But just as I wouldn't want to argue that a girl who entered this kind of life should try to get out of it, so I wouldn't hesitate to warn all girls, particularly the talented ones, against throwing themselves rashly into something there's no escape from afterwards;⁷² especially⁷³ since in those very communities virginity is often in considerable danger, and
- 15 since you could accomplish at home whatever is accomplished there.

Catharine Well, you ply me with many and mighty arguments, but on this subject my mind can't be changed.

- Eubulus** If I can't persuade you – as I'd like to do, though – remember this at least: that Eubulus warned you. Meanwhile I pray by all my love for you
- 20 that this longing of yours may prove luckier than my advice.

NOTES

1 Eubulus means 'good counsellor.'

Conjecture that similarity of theme here and in a dialogue between Giles and Leonard printed in the March 1522 edition owes something to an incident in the family of Erasmus' friend Pieter Gillis (Smith *Key* 7, 15) is unconvincing; see 'Patterns' n91. But Smith was surely right in calling attention to similarities between Luther's treatise *De votis monasticis* (1521) and Erasmus' criticisms of monasticism in this and other colloquies of the 1520s (*Key* 13–15). The parallels are too plain and too significant to be ignored. Erasmus did not owe his ideas on monasticism to Luther. Nor did he, as did Luther, want to abolish monasticism, but rather to reform it; he wanted fewer but better monks (Allen *Epp* 1747:105, 1891:214–28; *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 647E). By the time the present colloquy was published he was undoubtedly familiar with some of Luther's texts, including the *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae*, as well as with the controversies and disturbances that followed their publication (see Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 13–15 and *passim*). His enemies often accused him of sharing Lutheran opinions, and even some of his friends in high places were disquieted by his early reactions to Luther. On such subjects as monasticism their uneasiness is understandable, for on those topics many of Erasmus' pronouncements, if more temperate than Luther's, were essentially the same, for example on the superiority of Christian marriage to celibacy; see n56 below.

For Luther see his *De votis monasticis* (1521) WA 8 573–669 / LW 44 251–400. Many readers of this colloquy in 1523–4 must have known of well-publicized reports from German and Swiss towns about radical innovations affecting monastic houses. In Wittenberg, the centre of Lutheran activity, Augustinians left the cloister and the congregation was dissolved (November 1521–January 1522); some monks and nuns married. Lutheran and Zwinglian reforms found strong support in Basel and Zürich.

Some of Erasmus' strictures on monasticism resemble those in the *Contra vitam monasticam* (c 1516) of Andrea Alciato (better known as a jurist and as author of *Emblemata*). Erasmus had read this in manuscript before 1521, but it was not printed until 1695. On the history of the manuscript, about which Alciato had much anxiety when it was in Erasmus' possession, see Allen Ep 1201:15n and Myron P. Gilmore *Humanists and Jurists* (Cambridge, Mass 1963) 79–82.

2 On the symbolism of the rose see 'Courtship' n57 above.

3 Cf Horace *Odes* 1.27.17–18.

4 See 288:4–6 above.

5 The situation Catherine describes had been sketched earlier in the *Colloquies*. In both scenes the father, against his better judgment, finally consents; see n1 above. In *De contemptu mundi* (LB V 1259B–E / ASD V-1 78:36–68 / CWE 66 168–9) Erasmus tells a story of a strong-minded, worthy girl who has long resolved to enter a convent despite the tearful pleas of family and friends. But in that narrative the writer's sympathies are with Margarete, who carries out her intention. She is unmoved by her family's emotions. Bainton points out that her words to them are borrowed from the advice of Jerome in Ep 14 to Heliodorus, a famous text on the ascetic life (*Erasmus of Christendom* 17, and see Sem Dresden's introduction to *De contemptu mundi* in ASD V-1 14–15). They are not, however, sentiments with which Erasmus sympathizes when writing *in propria persona* on monasticism.

6 *pro thesauro carbones*, proverbial for something sought because it is expected to be valuable but when brought to light proves to be trifling. In *Adagia* I ix 30 Erasmus cites four passages from Lucian, one of them (*Timon* 41) in a dialogue he had translated, another in a dialogue translated by More (*Philopseudes* 32). On Erasmus and Lucian see the introduction to these volumes xxviii and n28. Some of Erasmus' Parisian critics misinterpreted *pro thesauro carbones* because they failed to recognize it as a proverb (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 938B–D). Erasmus quotes it ironically about himself in a letter (Allen Ep 1342:510–17 / CWE Ep 1342:557–64).

7 See *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 647D–E and 290:23–5 below.

8 She is the same age as Gaspar in 'Youth' (96:16). He too was urged by monks to enter a monastery but rejected the invitation (98:16–20). In late medieval centuries some entered at fourteen or fifteen; fifteen seems to have been the more common age for a novice. How old Erasmus was when he entered Steyn we cannot tell, because the date of his birth is uncertain, as is the exact date of his admission (1486 or 1487). If he was born in 1469 he would have been closer to the normal age for entrance than if he was born in 1466 or 1467 (on his age see 'The Funeral' n97). He tells us some youths were lured to the monastery before emerging from their fourteenth year and without their relatives' knowledge (Allen Ep 447:140–6 / CWE Ep 447:151–6). Irregularities of this and other kinds were ended by the Council of Trent, which decreed that in no religious order

should profession be made before completion of one's sixteenth year (session 25 [1563] Decree on regulars and nuns, chapter 15; Tanner II 781). In earlier times parents had the right to retrieve a son under twelve from a monastery. Nowadays, according to Erasmus, it would be better to allow them to do so if the son is under twenty-five (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 647E). Erasmus thought no one should be permitted to take final vows until thirty or even forty (see 'Youth' n76 above; Allen Ep 447:641-6 / CWE Ep 447:709-15, Allen Ep 2522:101-2n). Luther says (1521) some religious orders designated fourteen as the age for taking vows, others eighteen (*De votis monasticis* WA 8 661:9-14 / LW 44 387-8), but he believed thirty was the earliest age at which one should take final vows (*An den christlichen Adel* [1520] WA 6 468:8-10 / LW 44 215-16). Or monastic vows should be optional and for a term only (*De votis monasticis* WA 8 661:14-39 / LW 44 388-9).

- 9 *Adagia* I viii 43. Erasmus remembered this from Terence *Andria* 305.
- 10 So, Erasmus says in *Compendium vitae*, the monastery of Steyn seemed to him 'a society like that of angels' after he listened to the blandishments of a certain Cornelis (CWE 4 407:91-6).
- 11 See 1 Cor 6:12, a passage examined in 'The Godly Feast' (189:39-192:4). Other choices besides marriage or enclosure in a monastic community are open to her. She could become a Beguine ('The Funeral' 771:15-16 and n48) or a secular tertiary, like her namesake Catherine of Siena ('Apotheosis of Reuchlin' n43), in a Dominican, Franciscan, or Carmelite sisterhood, living a pious life but in the world and not in a religious community or bound by vows.
- 12 Cf 'Courtship' 266:12-13.
- 13 It is *animus incorruptus in corpore incorrupto*, Erasmus writes in *Virginis et martyris comparatio* LB v 593C. The customary Catholic interpretation of Matt 19:10-12 and 1 Cor 7:25-6, that spiritually virginity is a higher state than matrimony (repeated by the Council of Trent session 24 [1563] Canons on the sacrament of marriage, canon 10; Tanner II 755) was specifically and unquestionably regulative for all clergy and professed members of religious orders (monks, friars, nuns). The position of Erasmus, consistently maintained, was that although virginity is the more honoured state, for most marriage is the safer (*De vidua christiana* LB v 735A). See 'Courtship' n53. His treatment of such subjects, so often strongly critical, has clearly the intention of challenging orthodox assumptions and the effect of denying them. In his note on 1 Cor 7:19 he remarks that Christ, who did not demand celibacy of his followers, lest he seem to oppose nature, calls those blessed who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matt 19:12). But by the kingdom of heaven, Erasmus adds, Christ meant the preaching of the gospel (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 695D); see also the paraphrase on this text (LB VII 103E-104B). Of course Erasmus' critics would not accept the implications of his interpretation of 'the kingdom of heaven.' See for example Telle, who concludes that Erasmus' interpretation of Matt 19:10-12 and 1 Cor 7 is 'devastating' and that parts of it negate both Catholic and Lutheran doctrine (*Erasmus et le septième sacrement* 233-50, 249-50).
- 14 In the 'negative' chapter (12) of *De contemptu mundi* it is said that many who become monks do so for the sake of a more comfortable life (LB v 1262A / ASD v-1 84:189-90 / CWE 66 173). Too many monks 'love their bellies rather than their books' (Allen Ep 447:375 / CWE Ep 447:409-10).

- 15 *Exomologesis* (1524) includes a scandalous anecdote about the prior of a double monastery (LB v 154A–B). Writing to Bishop John Longland of Lincoln in 1528 on contrasts between ancient and modern monasteries, Erasmus wonders what Augustine would say if he could see the many monasteries in Holland ‘that are no different from public brothels’ (Allen Ep 2037:205–6). Similarly Erasmus’ *Dilutio Clithovei* ed E.V. Telle (Paris 1968) 87–8.
- 16 An example of professing virginity and living at home was Demetrias, an aristocratic Roman lady. Jerome’s letter to her (Ep 130), written in 414, on how she should live is a classic of early Christian literature.
- 17 Apparently the name is Erasmus’ invention; it sounds like a pun on Cistercian. *Chryses* in Greek means ‘golden’; in Dutch, Gouda suggests *goud* ‘gold,’ as Petrus Rabus’ edition (Rotterdam 1693) reminds us (136n). Erasmus’ monastery at Steyn was very close to Gouda. This ‘Chrysercian’ house is obviously a double monastery of monks and nuns, strictly separated in cloisters but using the same chapel. The superior of the monastery, because of his priesthood, was spiritual director of the nuns. Gilbertine and Brigittine orders were the most common examples of orders having double monasteries. A character in a later colloquy is in a Brigittine monastery for a time (‘The Old Men’s Chat’ 457:33–6). Erasmus knew of the Brigittine community at Syon Abbey near London, where a friend of his lived (Allen Ep 89 introduction). A Basel divine with whom he was well acquainted, Johannes Oecolampadius (‘Cyclops’ n15), retired to a Brigittine monastery in 1520 (Allen Ep 1095:173n) and left it in 1522. But if this ‘Chrysercian’ house is a Brigittine community it is a far cry from Syon Abbey, which was renowned for spiritual austerity as well as its size and splendour. It was the only Brigittine house in England.
- 18 Erasmus suggests in Allen Ep 447:379–87 / CWE Ep 447:415–20 that drinking was a means of escape from the boredom of responsibility for a house of nuns; see 290:18–21 below. Were he to return to the monastery at Steyn, Erasmus writes to the prior there (1514), it would mean exchanging his studies for drinking parties (Allen Ep 296:206–11 / CWE Ep 296:221–6).
- 19 In a memorandum denying a slanderous rumour by a ‘false flattering lyeng moncke’ Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, described the man as ‘not unlyke to Jodocus, a moncke of home Erasmus maketh mencion in hys Colloquies, who yff he were not garnysshed with these glorious tytells, Monck, Doctor, Vicedeane, and Suffragane, were worthye to walke openlye in the streates with a bell and coxmoke’ (*Narratives of the Days of the Reformation* ed J.G. Nichols Camden Society 1st series 77 [London 1859; repr New York 1968] 227). The anecdote amplifies the brief comment in the colloquy. Foxe used it in the first edition (Latin) of his *Acts and Monuments* (1559) and in his first English edition of 1563. It came apparently from Cranmer’s papers. See *A Confutation of Unwritten Verities in The Works of Thomas Cranmer* ed J.E. Cox, rs 15–16, 2 vols (Cambridge 1844–6) II 38. The fool’s cap is mentioned in ‘The Well-to-do Beggars’ 478:6, 10, 480:12.
- 20 Cf Allen Ep 2037:244–5.
- 21 See ‘Courtship’ n87 and *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 678A.
- 22 See ‘Courtship’ 266:37–9 and n76.
- 23 On the history of the notions of the mystical marriage and *sponsa Christi*, which dates from patristic interpretation of the Song of Solomon, see John Bugge *Virginitas* (The Hague 1975) 59–110.

- 24 Sappho of Lesbos. Her 'behaviour' alludes to her reputed lesbianism, her 'talent' to her gift of lyric poetry.
- 25 As made known in the Decalogue: 'Honour thy father and thy mother'
- 26 The same assertion is made but opposed in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 647D-F. When arguments for 'this case' were made they nearly always appealed to Matt 10:37, 12:30; Mark 10:21; Luke 9:57-62, 14:26. 'One must flee to Christ, say they, even if it means trampling on one's family, and against the inspiration of the Holy Spirit parental authority goes for nothing' (Allen Ep 447:41-3 / CWE Ep 447:45-7). Rebuking one who had abandoned the ascetic life, Jerome urges him to return; to remember Christ's words, 'He that is not with me is against me' (Matt 12:30); and (quoting from another source) to 'trample your father under foot; and with dry eyes fly to the standard of the cross' (Ep 14.2). If parents hinder our ministry they ought not to be recognized by us (Augustine *De fide et symbolo* 4.9). If one's parents need support, one must not leave them to enter a religious order; if they do not need support, one may abandon them and enter religion (Thomas Aquinas *Summa theologiae* II-II, q 101, art 4, ad 4). Luther strictly and repeatedly enjoined obedience to parents, though his own sudden and secret decision to become a monk (1505) outraged his father, who long remained unreconciled.
- 27 Similarly the two friars in 'The Well-to-do Beggars' remind an innkeeper that what he professed in baptism is of first importance (482:5-14). See also 'The Seraphic Funeral' 1004:15-18 and n26; *De contemptu mundi* LB v 1262E / ASD v-1 85 / CWE 66 175. R.G. Kleinhans considers that in 1523, the year in which this colloquy was published, Erasmus' views on certain theological questions were taking a new turn as a consequence of his reading of Luther. One result was a more decisive emphasis, evident in his Paraphrases on Mark and Acts, on the free forgiveness of sins in baptism. The dedication of Mark to Francis I was dated December 1523, but the book did not come out until several months later (Allen Ep 1400 introduction); Acts, dedicated to Clement VII, appeared in 1524. See Kleinhans 'Luther and Erasmus: Another Perspective' *Church History* 39 (1970) 459-69. His argument is questioned by Albert Rabil Jr *Erasmus and the New Testament* (San Antonio 1972) 137n. On baptism see also 'The Godly Feast' 196:13-19 with the notes, n57 below, 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 332:4-7 and nn11-12, 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n105, 'A Fish Diet' n62; 'The Seraphic Funeral' 1004:15-18 and n26; E.W. Kohls *Die Theologie des Erasmus* 2 vols (Basel 1966) I 73-5, 122-4.
- 28 Note 25 above
- 29 As in Eph 6:1; Col 3:20. For the Sorbonne's censure and Erasmus' defence of this sentence see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 938D-F.
- 30 See Allen Ep 447:47-9 / CWE Ep 447:51-3 and *Ecclesiastes* LB v 878B on the question of entering monasteries; *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1191D-1192A / ASD v-1 311:167-312:192 on the general topic of obedience to parents.
- 31 Free-born; the opposite of *servi* 'slaves'
- 32 When listing the complaints of critics, in January 1521, who charged him with Lutheran sympathies, Erasmus mentions as one of their charges his warnings against enticements of young persons to the bondage of monastic life before they understood its nature - or their own (Allen Ep 1183:121-3 / CWE Ep 1183:131-4). His belief that such surrender of freedom amounts to voluntary

- 'servitude' is often enunciated; for example *Vita Hieronymi* (Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 148:412–149:420 / CWE 61 31); Allen Ep 447:24–34, 254–7, 553–5, 606–30 / CWE Ep 447:26–37, 277–80, 610–12, 671–98, Allen Ep 2037:242–58; *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 702A–B. For the Parisian theologians' objections see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 939A–C.
- 33 As in Venice, where Moors were sold like cattle (*scholia* in the March 1533 edition, cc 4 verso)
- 34 such . . . monasteries] Added in the March 1533 edition
- 35 'Nowadays it is by popular convention regarded as disgraceful to abandon a [monastic] profession once one has adopted it' (Allen Ep 296:25–6 / CWE Ep 296:26–7).
- 36 The longest and best exposition of this subject is in 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 476:2–482:4.
- 37 After Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican
- 38 The monastic robe
- 39 To abandon monastic dress – that is, to leave the order without permission – would be apostasy, a grave offence severely punished. Erasmus had run the risk of apostasy. See Allen Epp 447:435–6, 619–30, 1436:19–21 / CWE Epp 447:476–8, 686–98, 1436:20–2, and also introduction 284 above on his situation; for another statement on apostasy, without direct reference to himself but a typical opinion, *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1024C–1025B.
- 40 The 'white garment' of baptism. See 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n11.
- 41 Cf Allen Ep 447:563–79, 587–93 / CWE Ep 447:622–39, 649–57. For Erasmus' defence of the passage see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 939C–E.
- 42 1 Cor 7:21–3
- 43 because . . . vicious] Added in the September 1531 edition
- 44 Catharine's answer is correct. It would have been extraordinary, if not impossible, in Erasmus' society for a daughter still under parental authority to buy or sell a piece of property. Land, tenements, and hereditaments normally passed to heirs. The owner, even if male, had no control over their disposition.
- 45 *pietatis*. This line and Eubulus' reply to it also displeased Erasmus' Parisian critics; *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 939E–940B.
- 46 An echo of a much quoted sentence in *Enchiridion* beginning 'Monachatus non est pietas . . .' (LB V 65C / Holborn 135:8–9 / CWE 66 127): 'Being a monk is not a state of holiness but a way of life, which may be beneficial or not according to each person's physical and mental constitution.'
- 47 Not just anything, but Scripture, saints' lives, and other edifying literature
- 48 Chants, *cantiones ecclesiasticas*. Erasmus himself did not like either chants or organ music; see 'A Pilgrimage' n161.
- 49 Both here and in 'Youth' (cf 96:21–3) the young person is assumed to be competent to judge what pure doctrine is.
- 50 For Erasmus' answer to objections about this sentence see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 940B–C.
- 51 On the lines that follow see *ibidem* LB IX 940C–D.
- 52 In 'The Old Men's Chat' 456:40–1 and *Moriae encomium* LB IV 472A / ASD IV-3 160:548 / CWE 27 131 Erasmus notes that another order (his own, the Augustinian canons regular) wears linen outside, wool underneath.
- 53 by themselves] This phrase (*per se*) was added in the March 1533 edition.

54 See n44 above.

55 See *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 647D. Parental objection would be no hindrance if the girl had made a solemn, as opposed to simple or private, vow. But she has not made a solemn vow. On solemn and simple vows see *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 634B–637B and ‘A Fish Diet’ 693:34–694:11, 697:21–699:1.

56 *ingressum religionis*; *religionem* in the next line. *Religiosus* is the technical term for a person who is a member of a religious order or community, is bound by vows, and follows a rule (*regula*); Eubulus’ argument depends on the special meaning of *religiosi*, ‘the religious,’ which he (like Erasmus) rejects, insisting that all Christians are *religiosi* and that members of an order who arrogate this title to themselves are not on that account more religious than other Christians. Valla’s *De professione religiosorum* (c 1441), a dialogue on topics of this kind, is accompanied by an *apologia* addressed to Pope Eugenius IV in which the author asks, ‘Aren’t you, the supreme pontiff and head of the faith [*religionis*], a religious [*religiosus*]?’ (Valla *Opera omnia* ed Eugenio Garin, 2 vols [Turin 1962] II 287–325; these pages are also numbered 99–137). On this dialogue see Charles Trinkaus ‘Humanist Treatises on the Status of the Religious: Petrarch, Salutati, Valla’ *Studies in the Renaissance* 11 (1964) 7–45, especially 36–45. Valla subjects the claims of professional *religiosi*, here defended by a friar, to destructive analysis, concluding that they have no spiritual virtues the pious laity lack; on the contrary they are, if anything, inferior and not (as they like to think) superior. Valla’s position in most respects is close to that of Erasmus. He is more aggressive than Erasmus is in the present colloquy but not more outspoken on friars than Erasmus is in ‘The Seraphic Funeral.’ Cf *Ecclesiastes* LB v 1022D–1023A. Valla’s dialogue was not printed in Erasmus’ lifetime, apparently. Erasmus may have known of it, but whether he had seen a manuscript copy we cannot tell.

‘There are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit’ (1 Cor 12:4). Nuns are holy when they voluntarily dedicate themselves entirely to Christ, their spouse; as are all Christians, whatever their calling, if they live pure lives and fear the Lord. So Erasmus in *Enarratio in psalmum xxxiii* LB v 399F–400A and *Responsio adversus febricitantis libellum* LB x 1675B–C. See also a later passage denouncing the common acceptance of a double standard of moral behaviour, one for those in holy orders and one for the laity (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 1025D–F). These Erasmian convictions were hardly novelties; they voiced principles as old as Christianity itself. In 1523, however, they were easily identified with Luther’s opinions. In *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae*, one of his three momentous treatises of 1520, Luther declared that the works of monks and priests, no matter how holy, are no different in the sight of God from the works of a pious peasant labouring in the fields or of a housewife in the home; all works are measured by God by faith alone, *sola fide* (WA 6 539:5–10, 541:1–5 / LW 36 75, 78). Kleinhans (n27 above) notes that Erasmus uses the phrase *sola fidem evangelicam* in his paraphrase on Luke 24:47 (LB VII 488B), which was published at the same time, August 1523, as ‘The Girl with No Interest in Marriage.’

57 See n27 above. When comparing ancient and contemporary monasticism Erasmus emphasizes and idealizes the simplicity, purity, and informality of early monks. They were not burdened with ‘ceremonies,’ not cloistered, not

overscrupulous about dress, not subjected to harsh punishments or bound by vows except those binding on every Christian (*Vita Hieronymi* in Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 145:308–22, 146:334–6 / CWE 61 29; Allen Ep 447:130–5 / CWE Ep 447:139–45). The key to this interpretation of monasticism, G. Chantraine maintains, is Erasmus' theology of baptism ('*Mystère*' et '*philosophie du Christ*' selon Erasme: *étude de la lettre à P. Volz et de la 'Ratio verae theologiae'* (1518) [Namur 1971] 82–5, 135–49). Erasmus regards conventional and received notions of opposition between 'world' and cloister as misconceptions. Spirituality must not be identified exclusively or mainly with monasticism. It is the vows of baptism that are indissoluble, making the crucial difference between world and spirit. Uncritical defenders of monasticism, Erasmus believed, often substituted a human institution for the divine one of baptism (see Chantraine 85–7). But, as Eubulus says in the colloquy (291:32 above), 'the question of religion is most urgent in baptism.'

In *Erasme et le septième sacrement* Telle contends that Erasmus' theology proceeds from his hostility to monasticism. But, as Chantraine argues (148–9), the reverse is true: Erasmus' opposition to monasticism proceeds from his theology, specifically from his theology of baptism. Hence the insistence in this colloquy and elsewhere on the importance of that sacrament. 'No vow is more sacred than that of baptism' ('A Fish Diet' 718:15). The final chapter of *De contemptu mundi* ends with assurance that one who keeps the vow made to Christ in baptism has no need to be concerned about the want of other vows. We have all we can do, Luther remarks, to keep that one vow (*De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae* WA 6 539:2–3 / LW 36 74–5). Received assumptions about the intrinsic superiority of the contemplative (monastic) life to the active life sometimes led to the inference that entrance into a religious order was a new baptism. Jerome hints as much (Epp 130.7, 139.3). Bernard of Clairvaux had no doubt that such a vow is a second baptism (*Liber de praescriptione et dispensatione* PL 182 889B–C); Luther rejected (as Erasmus did) any such claims (ibidem WA 6 539:11–543:3, *De votis monasticis* (1521) WA 8 596:18–23, *Vermahnung an die Geistlichen* (1530) WA 30 part 2 300:12–14, 26–8 / LW 36 75, 44 282, 34 27–8). The truly devout Christian is monk enough (*De contemptu mundi* LB V 1262C / ASD V-1 84 208–9 / CWE 66 174).

- 58 Cf 290:32. Here the phrase means what has the sanction of timeless and universal custom. It is not an idea strictly defined but for Erasmus had a moral and religious authenticity. On some aspects of natural law relevant to his interests see Guido Kisch *Erasmus und die Jurisprudenz seiner Zeit* (Basel 1960) 108–32; J.-C. Margolin 'L'idée de nature dans la pensée d'Erasme' in *Recherches érasmiennes* 9–44; O. Schottenloher 'Lex naturae und lex Christi bei Erasmus' in *Scrinium Erasmi* 11 253–99.
- 59 The Mosaic law; cf 290:32 above.
- 60 These words seemed arrogant mockery to Erasmus' clerical critics in Paris, but he defends them (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 940D–941B).
- 61 On such matches see 'Courtship' nn48 and 84. In reply to Spanish monks who disapproved of this passage Erasmus challenges them to produce a text from ancient law, Mosaic law, or gospel or apostolic teaching in support of clandestine marriage, or a text in sacred writings that has such phrases as *verba de praesenti* (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1068E, 1069C–D).

- 62 Those outside monasteries as well as those inside are dedicated to Christ and therefore 'married' to him. People who quote Ps 105:15 (Vulg 104:15), 'Touch not mine anointed,' with reference to 'religious' would do better to use it of all Christians (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 1025C).
- 63 Since we are in the church, which is the bride of Christ (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 702B)
- 64 So 291:32-4 above
- 65 290:23, lines 19-20 above
- 66 doctors] 'theologians' in editions before September 1531, when it was changed to 'doctors.' Lines 1-2 displeased the Parisians (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 940E).
- 67 See 'The Profane Feast' n16.
- 68 To flee . . . religion.] Added to the final authorized edition, March 1533
- 69 Cf 290:24-30 above.
- 70 Augustine's correct but cold attitude towards his father, who was long a pagan, is an example. Paul lays down principles to guide Christians who were members of a family that included unbelievers, but he is concerned with relations between husband and wife (1 Cor 7:12-16), not father and son.
- 71 Without condemning or approving outright, Erasmus is at pains in what follows to emphasize the urgency of long deliberation before committing oneself irrevocably to a course of life. See for example Allen Ep 447:52-63 / CWE Ep 447:56-67, and cf 'Youth' n76.
- 72 Catharine's question and Eubulus' reply to this point are identified as 'the conclusion of that colloquy' in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1107:37-1108:2.
- 73 especially . . . there] Added in the March 1531 edition

THE REPENTANT GIRL

Virgo poenitens

First printed in the August 1523 edition.

Like 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage,' to which it is the sequel, this colloquy had no formal title in the first printing, only the names of the speakers. The present title was added as a running head in the August–September 1524 edition.

To the Parisian theologians' complaint that the youth commends the girl for not remaining 'in religion,' Erasmus retorted that what Eubulus really congratulates her upon is her prompt decision to leave the monastery before she made irrevocable profession (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 94^{1E–F}). It is not likely that this valid distinction appeased his critics.

Clément Marot translated this colloquy into French, but his version remained unprinted in the sixteenth century; it appeared finally in *Oeuvres de Clément Marot* ed Georges Guiffrey, 5 vols (Paris 1875–1931) II 215–60. Text now in *Traductions* ed C.A. Mayer (Geneva 1980) 298–308. Catharine's friend in the translation is called Clément, not Eubulus.

On other translations of colloquies by Marot see introductions to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 285 and 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' 500.

EUBULUS, CATHARINE

Eubulus I hope I'm always greeted by such doorkeepers!

Catharine And I always by such callers.¹

5 **Eubulus** But farewell, Catharine.

Catharine What do I hear? Am I bid farewell before I am greeted?

Eubulus I didn't come here to see you cry. What's the meaning of this? Your eyes are filled with tears the instant you catch sight of me.

Catharine Why run off? Do stay here, I say; I'll put on another look and
10 we'll be cheerful enough.

Eubulus What birds are these I see here?

Catharine He's prior of the community.² Don't steal away – they've been boozing a long time already. Sit down for a little while; after he's gone we'll have a chat as we used to do.

15 **Eubulus** Well, I'll obey you – who wouldn't listen to me. Now we're alone. Tell me the whole story, for I'd like to learn it from *you*.

Catharine Of the many friends I thought so very wise, there was none, I see now, who gave me more sensible, mature advice than you, the youngest of them all.

Eubulus Tell me, how did you overcome the opposition of your parents?

5 **Catharine** First, by the shameless insistence of the monks and nuns; next, my mother's resolution was undermined by my pleas and coaxings. My father absolutely refused to be budged. He didn't surrender, but finally, when all the siege guns were brought against him, he too was worn down and subdued rather than won over. This was done over the wine. They
10 threatened him with a bad end if he refused Christ his promised bride.³

Eubulus The shamelessness of the brutes!⁴ Then what?

Catharine For three days I'm kept at home by myself. During that time some women from this convent – lay sisters,⁵ they're called – were always on hand, encouraging my resolve to stick to my holy purpose and taking good
15 care I should not be visited by any friend or relative who seemed likely to change my mind. Meanwhile robes were being fitted and all preparations made for the feast.

Eubulus What frame of mind were you in while all this was going on? You weren't wavering?

20 **Catharine** No, but something so awful happened to me that I'd rather die ten times than suffer it again.

Eubulus What was it, I beseech you?

Catharine I can't utter it.

Eubulus To tell me is to tell your friend.

25 **Catharine** Promise you'll keep quiet about it?

Eubulus I was going to see to that even if you hadn't made it a condition. As if you don't really know me yet!

Catharine A horrible-looking spectre appeared to me.

Eubulus Your evil genius,⁶ no doubt, who put you up to this.

30 **Catharine** In fact I think it was a devil.⁷

Eubulus Tell me, what did it look like? As they do in pictures – hooked beak, long horns, harpy's claws,⁸ very long tail?

Catharine You're joking. But I'd rather have the earth swallow me up than see such a spectre again.

35 **Eubulus** Were those female inciters⁹ present at the time?

Catharine No, and I never let them know about it, though they inquired most persistently about the trouble when they found me in a dead faint.

Eubulus Do you want me to tell you what it was?

Catharine Yes, if you can.

40 **Eubulus** Those women had put a spell on you, or rather had charmed your wits away. But you stuck to your decision all the while?

Catharine Certainly, for they said this happens to many who vow themselves to Christ, but if the tempter were vanquished in that first encounter, all would be peaceful thereafter.

Eubulus What was the fanfare like when you were led forth?

- 5 **Catharine** They dress me in all my finery and let down my hair, exactly as though I'm about to be married –

Eubulus To a fat monk! (Damn this cough!)

Catharine I'm escorted in broad daylight from my home to the convent. Crowds of people rush up to see the show.

- 10 **Eubulus** Smart actors, those! They know how to put on their plays before the simple-minded rabble.¹⁰ How many days did you spend in that holy community?

Catharine Nearly twelve.

Eubulus But what changed that stubborn mind of yours?

- 15 **Catharine** I won't say what, but something very important. Six days after my arrival I send for my mother, vowing and swearing that if she wants me to survive she must get me out of the convent. She refuses and urges me to be steadfast. After that I summon my father. He too scolds me, adding that he had with much difficulty mastered his feelings, that I in turn must now
20 master my pride and not bring on him the disgrace of having backed out of the bargain. At last, when I see I'm making no progress, I tell my parents that if they so command me, I'll die to please them; for that's what I've made up my mind to do if I'm not rescued quickly. – After hearing this they took me home.¹¹

- 25 **Eubulus** It's well for you to back out quickly before committing yourself to perpetual servitude.¹² But I've still to hear what changed your mind so suddenly.

Catharine Nobody has yet learned that from me, nor will you.

Eubulus What if I guess it?

- 30 **Catharine** You won't; I'm sure of that. And if you should, I wouldn't say so.

Eubulus All the same, I do guess it. – But meantime a lot of money's been lost.

Catharine Over forty crowns.¹³

- Eubulus** Those carousing¹⁴ wedding guests! But I'm glad you're safe and
35 sound even if the money's gone. Next time listen to good advice.

Catharine So I will, and like the fisherman¹⁵ I'll know by sad experience.

NOTES

1 Literally 'beaters' or 'strikers'; here used of those who knock on a door. See *Paraphrasis in Elegantias Vallae* LB I 1112A–B / ASD I-4 305:701.

- 2 See 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 289:4–6. As noted in n17 there, this is a double monastery with both monks and nuns.
- 3 See 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 292:33–5.
- 4 Erasmus' critics objected to this sentence; *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 941B–C.
- 5 *conversas*; cf 'converse' (now obsolete) in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- 6 Attendant spirit; see *Adagia* I i 72 and 'Rash Vows' n22.
- 7 *cacodaemonem*, a Latinized Greek form
- 8 Cf 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin' 248:33–8.
- 9 *hortatrices*. The word is found in Statius *Thebaid* 9:717 and Quintilian 11.3.103.
- 10 Another line of offense to Erasmus' critics. See *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 941C–E.
- 11 In the *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 941F Erasmus says the young man congratulates her for having 'left at the right time' (*tempestive*), that is, before taking vows. This is the point Erasmus wishes to emphasize: not to commit oneself rashly or irrevocably to a course of action that may be regretted later.
- 12 Cf 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 291:2–3.
- 13 In 'The Cheating Horse-Dealer' a man who paid fifteen crowns for a horse decides later he was cheated, but has the satisfaction of selling it back for twenty-six crowns (560:11–12). In 'The Fabulous Feast' a king gives a courtier a gift of forty crowns (580:17–18). Although we cannot tell how much in present terms the 'wedding feast' cost Catharine's father, we may be certain the dinner was expensive and he spent a sum he now bitterly regrets.
- 14 *comessatores*, a noun Latinized from Greek *κωμάζω*, 'behave like Komos,' god of revelry. Erasmus probably borrowed it from Terence *Adelphi* 783.
- 15 Who put his hand into his fishing net and was bitten by a scorpion-fish; he learned by 'sad experience' to be more careful thereafter; *Adagia* I i 29. The familiar English analogues are 'The burnt child dreads the fire' and 'Once bitten, twice shy.'

MARRIAGE

Coniugium

First printed in the August 1523 edition as *Coniugium*. Later *Uxor μεμψίγαμος* 'The Wife Complaining of Marriage' was added as a running title.

The sound advice Eulalia gives to Xanthippe, though imparted confidentially, had been common property in texts on marriage since classical antiquity. Some of it comes obviously from St Paul; some is found expressly in Plutarch's *Coniugalia praecepta* (*Moralia* 138A–146A); but Xenophon, Jerome, and other writers, pagan and Christian, are recalled by this colloquy. Most of the counsel in 'Marriage' would have been familiar to mature readers. In addition, his own observations and common sense supplied Erasmus with a store of practical wisdom on the subjects so troubling to Xanthippe, and he resolves all the questions with the invincible assurance of a confirmed bachelor.

Because he does not parade his learning or allow Eulalia to borrow too much of it, the conversation has an informality and naturalness that make it far more readable than most of the treatises on marriage turned out by moralists and divines. As in so many other colloquies, Erasmus conveys here in an artistic and anecdotal way what he writes elsewhere in a more systematic and professedly more serious manner and for ostensibly, but not actually, more serious purposes. For his writings on the subject see the introductions to 'Courtship' and 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage.' All the topics treated in this colloquy are elaborated in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (1526), a treatise that he says Queen Catherine of England, as early as June 1525, wished him to write (Allen Ep 1581:653–4 / cwe Ep 1581:727–8, Allen Ep 1727:1–4). In 1527 Henry VIII began negotiations with the papacy about an annulment of his marriage to Catherine. For students of Tudor history this fact gives additional interest to Erasmus' discourse in this treatise on impediments to marriage (LB v 633E–646D). For his private comment see Allen Ep 2315:131–47. But to a reader of the *Colloquies* the principal value of the work is its comprehensiveness as a guide to Erasmus' judgments on important aspects of married life. On another treatise of comparable interest, Vives' *De institutione feminae christianae* (1524), see the introduction to 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' 500. That too was inscribed to Catherine of Aragon, queen of England.

Whether Erasmus borrowed any wisdom on marriage, children, good behaviour, or comparable blessings of domestic life from other sources than the ancient and Christian teachings he knew so well is doubtful. He had no

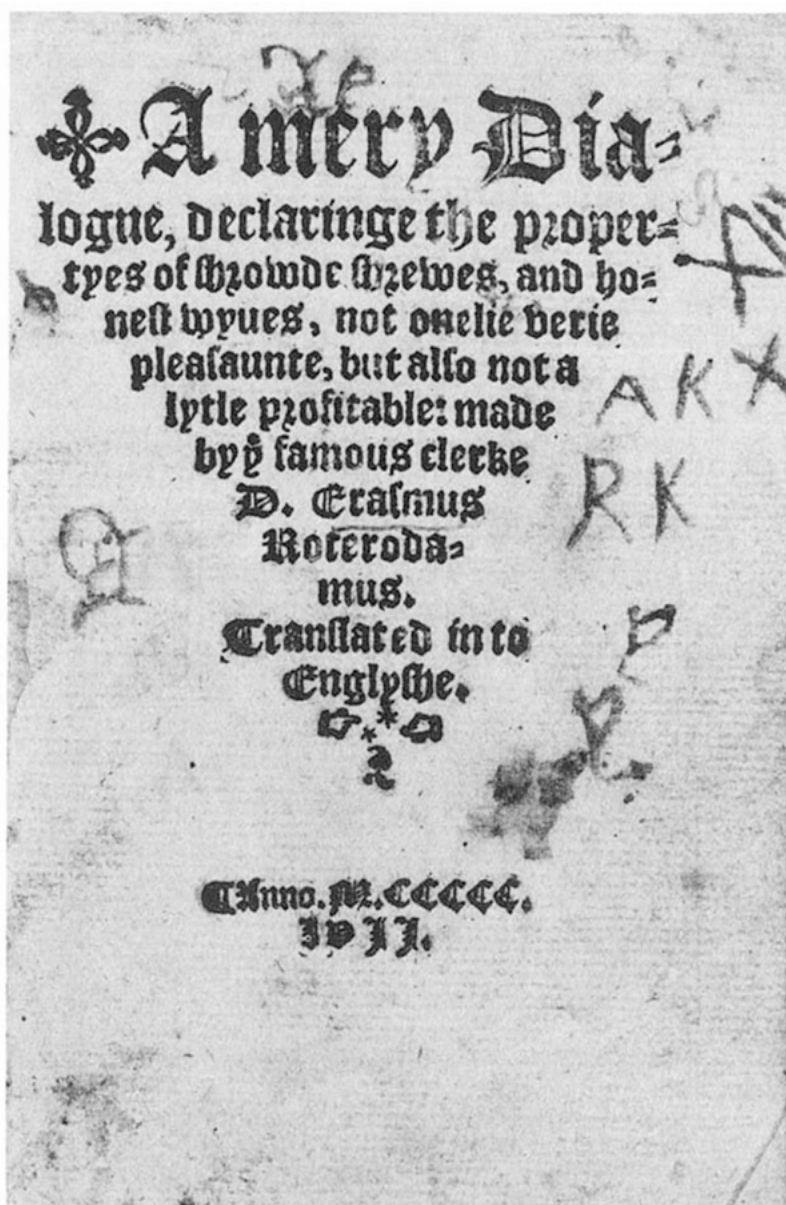
Colloquio d' Erasmo
intitulado institución d'l
Matrimonio christiano:
traduzido de latín en len-
gua Castellana: por Die-
go Morejon.

Eulalia. Xanthippe.



1528.

Title-page of the second impression of the first known
Spanish translation of *Coniugium*, by Diego Morijón
Valencia: Juan Joffre 1528
Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich



Title-page of an anonymous English version of *Coniugium*
London: [John Cawood for] Anthony Kytson 1557
Courtesy of The British Library

need to do so. He may, however, have read or examined such late medieval treatises as *De re uxoria* of Francesco Barbaro (d 1454), a popular work printed in 1513 (Paris), reissued in 1553 and twice in the seventeenth century, and turned into Italian (Venice 1548), French (1667), and English (as *Directions for Love and Marriage*, a version made by 'a person of quality,' London 1677). It was a successful homily, with sound though conventional doctrine and lacking the liveliness of Erasmus' colloquy, which offers old wine in new bottles.

Coniugium, one of the most popular colloquies, was translated in the sixteenth century into Spanish, English, French, Italian, German, and Dutch (BE 2nd series *Colloquia* III 111–16; and see the Erasmian bibliographies compiled by J.-C. Margolin). It inspired the *Coloquios matrimoniales* of Pedro de Luxán, which went through eleven editions between 1559 and 1589 (Bataillon *Erasme et l'Espagne* 691–2). An anonymous English version, *A mery Dialogue, declaring the propertyes of shrowde shrewes, and honest wyues*, was published in London in 1557 (STC 10455); text in De Vocht *Earliest English Translations* 57–93 and Spurgeon 245–83. 'Marriage,' probably in this translation, may have contributed – through its story of how a husband corrects the tantrums of his young, unhappy wife (see 314:24–315:36 below) – to the plot of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. On this question see Richard Hosley 'Sources and Analogues of *The Taming of the Shrew*' *Huntington Library Quarterly* 27 no 3 (1963–4) 290–302 and Peter Alexander 'A Case of Three Sisters' in the *Times Literary Supplement* 8 July 1965 page 588.

Steven Ozment *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, Mass and London 1983) is an informative, illustrated study, based on contemporary documents and publications, of marriage and family life, especially in Germany. It makes little use of the wealth of material in Erasmus' *Colloquia*, however.

EULALIA, XANTHIPPE¹

Eulalia Greetings, Xanthippe! I've been dying to see you.

Xanthippe Same to you, my dearest Eulalia. You look lovelier than ever.

5 **Eulalia** So you greet me by making fun of me right away?

Xanthippe Not at all; I mean it.²

Eulalia Maybe this new dress flatters my figure.

Xanthippe Of course it does. I haven't seen anything prettier for a long time. British cloth, I suppose?

10 **Eulalia** British wool with Venetian dye.³

Xanthippe Softer than satin. What a charming shade of purple! Where did you get such a marvellous gift?

Eulalia Where should honest wives get them except from their husbands?

Xanthippe Lucky you to have such a husband! As for me, I might as well
5 have married a mushroom⁴ when I married my Nicholas.

Eulalia Why so, if you please? Are you falling out so soon?

Xanthippe I'll never fall in with the likes of him. You see I'm in rags: that's
how *he* allows his wife to appear. Damned if often I'm not ashamed to go
out in public when I see how well dressed other women are who married
10 husbands much worse off than mine.

Eulalia Feminine finery, as St Peter the apostle teaches⁵ (for I heard this in
a sermon recently), consists not of clothes or any other adornment of the
person but of chaste and modest sentiments and embellishments of the mind.
Harlots are decked out for vulgar eyes. We're sufficiently well dressed if we
15 please one husband.

Xanthippe But meanwhile that fine gentleman, so stingy towards his wife,
squanders the dowry he got from me – no slight one – as fast as he can.

Eulalia On what?

Xanthippe On whatever he pleases: wine – whores – dice.

20 **Eulalia** That's no way to talk.

Xanthippe But it's the truth. Besides, when he comes home drunk in the
middle of the night, after being long awaited, he snores all night and
sometimes vomits in bed – to say no worse.

Eulalia Hush! You bring reproach on yourself when you reproach your
25 husband.

Xanthippe Hope to die if I wouldn't rather sleep with a brood-sow⁶ than
with such a husband!

Eulalia Surely you don't welcome him with abuse then?⁷

Xanthippe Yes – as he deserves. He finds I'm no mute.⁸

30 **Eulalia** What does he do to counter you?

Xanthippe At first he used to talk back most ferociously, thinking he'd
drive me away with harsh words.

Eulalia The bickering never came to actual blows?

Xanthippe Once, at least, the argument grew so hot on both sides that it very
35 nearly ended in a fight.

Eulalia You don't say so!

Xanthippe He was swinging a club, yelling savagely all the while and
uttering dire threats.

Eulalia Weren't you scared at that?

40 **Xanthippe** Oh, no. When it came my turn, I grabbed a stool. Had he laid a
finger on me, he'd have found I didn't lack arms.

Eulalia A new sort of shield! You should have used your distaff for a lance.

Xanthippe He'd have found he had an Amazon to deal with.⁹

Eulalia My dear Xanthippe, this won't do.

Xanthippe What *does* do? If he won't treat me as a wife, I won't treat him as a husband.

Eulalia But Paul teaches that wives should be obedient to their husbands in all subjection.¹⁰ And Peter sets before us the example of Sarah, who would call her husband Abraham 'lord.'¹¹

Xanthippe So I've heard. But this same Paul teaches that husbands should cherish their wives as Christ has cherished his spouse the church.¹² Let him remember his duty and I'll remember mine.

Eulalia All the same, when things have come to such a pass that one person must yield to the other, the wife should give way to the husband.

Xanthippe Provided he deserves to be called husband. He treats me like a servant.¹³

Eulalia But tell me, my dear Xanthippe, did he stop threatening to beat you after that?

Xanthippe Yes – and he was wise to do so or he'd have got a cudgelling.

Eulalia But you haven't stopped brawling with him?

Xanthippe No, and I won't stop.

Eulalia What does he do all this time?

Xanthippe Do? Sometimes he sleeps, the lazy lout.¹⁴ Occasionally he just laughs, and at other times grabs his guitar, which has hardly three strings, and plays it as loud as he can to drown out my screaming.

Eulalia That infuriates you?

Xanthippe More than I could say. At times I can hardly keep my hands off him.

Eulalia Xanthippe, my dear, may I speak rather frankly with you?

Xanthippe You may.

Eulalia You may do the same with me. Our intimacy – which goes back almost to the cradle¹⁵ – surely demands this.

Xanthippe That's true. You've always been my dearest friend.

Eulalia Whatever your husband's like, bear in mind that there's no exchanging him for another. Once upon a time divorce was a final remedy for irreconcilable differences. Nowadays this has been entirely abolished; you must be husband and wife till the day you die.¹⁶

Xanthippe May heaven punish¹⁷ whoever robbed us of this right!

Eulalia Mind what you're saying. Christ so willed.¹⁸

Xanthippe I can scarcely believe it.

Eulalia It's the truth. There's nothing left now but to try to live in harmony by adjusting yourselves to each other's habits and personalities.

Xanthippe Can I reform him?

Eulalia What sort of men husbands are depends not a little on their wives.

Xanthippe Do you get along well with your husband?

Eulalia Everything's peaceful now.

5 **Xanthippe** There was some turmoil at first, then?

Eulalia Never a storm, but slight clouds appeared occasionally: the usual human experience. They could have caused a storm had they not been met with forbearance. Each of us has his own ways and opinions,¹⁹ and – to tell the truth – his own peculiar faults. If there's any place where one has a duty

10 to recognize these, not resent them,²⁰ surely it's in marriage.

Xanthippe Good advice.

Eulalia It frequently happens, however, that good will between husband and wife breaks down before they know each other well enough.²¹ This above all is to be avoided, for once contention arises love is not easily

15 recovered, especially if the affair reaches the point of harsh abuse. Things glued together are easily separated if you shake them immediately, but once the glue has dried they stick together as firmly as anything. Hence at the very outset no pains should be spared to establish and cement good will between husband and wife.²² This is accomplished mainly by submissiveness

20 and courtesy, for good will won merely by beauty of person is usually short-lived.

Xanthippe But tell me, please, by what arts you drew your husband to your ways.

Eulalia I'll tell you in order that you may imitate them.

25 **Xanthippe** If I can.

Eulalia It will be very easy if you want to; and it's not too late, for he's a young man and you a girl, and the marriage isn't a year old, I believe.

Xanthippe You're correct.

Eulalia I'll tell you, then, but only if you'll keep it secret.

30 **Xanthippe** Of course.

Eulalia My first concern was to be agreeable to my husband in every respect, so as not to cause him any annoyance. I noted his mood and feeling; I noted the circumstances too, and what soothed and irritated him, as do those who tame elephants and lions or suchlike creatures that can't be

35 forced.²³

Xanthippe That's the sort of creature I have at home!

Eulalia Those who approach elephants don't wear white, and those who approach bulls don't wear red, because these beasts are known to be enraged by such colours. Likewise tigers are driven so wild by the beating of drums

40 that they tear their own flesh. And trainers of horses have calls, cluckings, pattings,²⁴ and other means of soothing mettlesome animals. How much

more fitting for us to use those arts on our husbands, with whom, whether we like it or not, we share bed and board for our entire lives.

Xanthippe Go on with what you've begun.

Eulalia When these matters were looked after, I would adapt myself to him, taking care to avoid any unpleasantness.

Xanthippe How could you do that?

Eulalia First of all, I was vigilant in my management of household affairs,²⁵ the special province of wives. I made certain not only that nothing was omitted but that everything was suited to his taste, even in the slightest details.

Xanthippe What details?

Eulalia For example, if my husband were unusually fond of this or that dish, or if he liked his food cooked, or the bed made, in a certain way.

Xanthippe But how could you adapt yourself to one who wasn't at home or was drunk?

Eulalia Just a moment; I was coming to that. If ever my husband seemed quite depressed and I had no chance to appeal to him, I wouldn't laugh or joke, as some women like to do, but I too put on a sombre, worried look. As a mirror, if it's a good one, always gives back the image of the person looking at it, so should a wife reflect her husband's mood, not being gay when he's sad or merry when he's upset.²⁶ But whenever he was more upset than usual, I'd either soothe him with pleasant conversation or defer to his anger in silence until he cooled off and an opportunity came to correct or advise him. I'd do the same whenever he came home tipsy: at the time I'd say nothing except what was agreeable; I'd just coax him to bed.

Xanthippe Wives have an unhappy lot for sure if they must simply put up with husbands who are angry, drunk, and whatever else they please.

Eulalia As if this putting up with things didn't work both ways! Husbands have much to endure from our habits as well. On occasion, however – in a serious matter, when something important's at stake – it's right for a wife to reprove her husband;²⁷ trivial matters are better winked at.²⁸

Xanthippe What occasion, pray?

Eulalia When he's at leisure and not disturbed, worried, or tipsy, then she should admonish him politely, or rather entreat him – in private – to take better care of his property, reputation, or health in one respect or another. And this very admonition should be seasoned with wit and pleasantries. Sometimes I'd make my husband promise in advance not to be angry if I, a foolish woman, reproved him about something that seemed to concern his honour, health, or welfare. After reproving him as I intended, I'd break off that talk and turn to other, more cheerful topics. For as a rule, my dear Xanthippe, our mistake is that once we've started to talk we can't stop.²⁹

Xanthippe So they say.

Eulalia Above all I was careful not to scold my husband in the presence of others or to carry any complaint farther than the front door. Trouble's sooner mended if it's limited to two. But if something of this sort does
 5 prove intolerable, or can't be cured by the wife's reproof, it's more polite for her to take her complaint to her husband's parents and relatives than to her own,³⁰ and to state her case with such restraint that she won't seem to hate her husband but his fault instead. She should refrain from blabbing about everything, though, so that her husband may tacitly acknowledge and
 10 admire his wife's courtesy.

Xanthippe Whoever could do all this must be a philosopher.

Eulalia Oh, no; by such practices we'll entice our husbands to similar courtesy.

Xanthippe There are some no courtesy would improve.

15 **Eulalia** Well, I don't think so, but suppose there are. In the first place, remember you must put up with your husband, whatever he's like. Better, therefore, to put up with one who behaves himself or is made a little more accommodating by our politeness than with one who's made worse from day to day by our harshness. What if I were to mention examples of husbands
 20 who improved their wives by courtesy of this kind? How much more fitting for us to do the same for our husbands!

Xanthippe Then you'd tell me of an example very different from *my* husband.³¹

Eulalia I'm well acquainted with a certain nobleman, a learned and
 25 remarkably clever³² man. He married a girl of seventeen who had been reared wholly in her parents' country home (since nobles generally like to live in the country, for the sake of hunting and hawking). Her lack of sophistication recommended her, because he would fashion her to his tastes the more readily.³³ He undertook to teach her literature³⁴ and music and
 30 gradually to accustom her to repeating what she had heard in a sermon,³⁵ and by other devices to train her in what would be of later use. Since this was all new to the girl, who had spent her time in her own home in complete idleness³⁶ and been brought up amidst the chatter and pranks of servants, she began to grow bored. She became balky, and when her husband grew
 35 insistent she would cry and cry, sometimes throwing herself down and dashing her head against the floor as though she wished she were dead. Because there was no end to this, her husband, hiding his vexation, invited his wife to accompany him on a visit to the country, to his father-in-law's house, for a holiday. She accepted eagerly. When they arrived there the
 40 husband left his wife with her mother and sisters; he himself went hunting with his father-in-law. Then and there, when they're out of hearing, he

tells his father-in-law he had hoped for an amiable partner but now had one who was forever weeping and tormenting herself and could not be corrected by any reproofs. He begs for help in curing the daughter's fault. The father-in-law replies that he gave him his daughter once for all, that if she refused to obey his commands, he should exercise his rights and correct her by blows.³⁷ 'I know my rights,' says the son-in-law, 'but rather than resort to this desperate remedy I'd prefer to have her cured by your skill or authority.' The father-in-law promised to attend to the matter. A day or so later he seizes an opportunity to be alone with his daughter. Then, putting on a stern look, he begins to recall how homely she was, how ill-mannered, how often he had feared he would be unable to find her a husband. 'But,' he says, 'with the greatest difficulty I've found you a husband such as any girl, however favoured, would long for. And yet, not recognizing what I've done for you or realizing that you have such a husband – who would scarcely think you fit for one of his maidservants if he weren't the kindest of men – you rebel against him.' To make a long story short, the father's speech grew so heated that he seemed barely able to keep his hands off her. (For he's a man of marvellous cunning, capable of playing any comedy without a mask.)³⁸ Moved partly by fear, partly by the truth, the girl promptly went down on her knees before her father, begging forgiveness for the past and swearing she would be mindful of her duty in the future. He pardoned her, promising to be a most affectionate father if she carried out her promise.

Xanthippe Then what happened?

Eulalia After the conversation with her father, the girl went to her bedroom, met her husband privately, fell on her knees before him, and said, 'Husband, up to this time I have known neither you nor myself. Hereafter you shall see me a different person; only forget the past.' Her husband received this speech with a kiss and promised her everything if she kept her word.

Xanthippe Well? Did she keep it?

Eulalia As long as she lived. And there was nothing, however lowly, that she did not do promptly and willingly when her husband wished. So strong was the love born and confirmed between them. After some years the girl often congratulated herself on her luck in marrying such a husband. 'If it hadn't been for this,' she said, 'I'd have been the unhappiest woman in the world.'

Xanthippe Husbands like that are as scarce as white crows.³⁹

Eulalia If you don't mind, I'll tell you something about⁴⁰ a husband reformed by his wife's kindness: something that happened recently in this very city.⁴¹

Xanthippe I've nothing to do and I enjoy your conversation very much.

Eulalia There's a certain man of no mean rank who, like most of his class, used to hunt a good deal. In the country he came across some girl, the daughter of a poor peasant woman, with whom he – a man already fairly well along in years – fell passionately in love. On her account he'd often
 5 spend the night away from home, his excuse being his hunting. His wife, a woman of exceptional goodness, suspected something, investigated her husband's secret doings, and, after discovering the facts (I don't know how), went to their rude cottage. She found out everything: where he slept, what he drank out of, what dinnerware he had. No furniture there – just sheer
 10 poverty. The wife went home but soon came back, bringing with her a comfortable bed and furnishings and some silver vessels. She added money, too, advising the girl to treat him more handsomely on his next visit – all the while concealing the fact that she herself was his wife and pretending to be his sister. Some days later the husband returns there secretly. Noticing the
 15 new furniture and the more expensive household utensils, he asks where this uncommon luxury comes from. Some good lady (he's told), a relative of his, had brought it and had left orders to entertain him more properly thereafter. He suspected at once that his wife had done this. Back home, he asks her; she doesn't deny it. And why, he asks finally, had she sent the
 20 furniture to him? 'My dear husband,' she replies, 'you're used to a pretty comfortable life. I saw you were shabbily treated there. I thought that since you're so fond of the place, I ought to see that you're entertained more elegantly.'

Xanthippe Too good a wife! I'd sooner have made him a bed of nettles and
 25 thistles.

Eulalia But hear the conclusion. In view of so much gentleness and kindness on the part of his wife, the husband never again engaged in secret amours but enjoyed himself at home with his own wife. – I know you're acquainted with Gilbert the Hollander.⁴²

30 **Xanthippe** I know him.

Eulalia As you're aware, when he was in the prime of life he married a woman already in her declining years.

Xanthippe Perhaps he married the dowry, not the wife.

Eulalia Yes. Despising his wife, he doted on a mistress with whom he would
 35 often enjoy himself away from home. He seldom lunched or dined at home. What would you have done in this situation?

Xanthippe What? I'd have flown at his sweetheart's hair;⁴³ and when my husband was going to her I'd have emptied the chamber-pot on him,⁴⁴ so he'd be perfumed for his party.

40 **Eulalia** But how much more sensible this woman was! She invited the girl to her own home and received her cordially. Thus she enticed her husband

home too, without sorcery. And whenever he went out to dinner at the girl's, she sent over some fancy dish, bidding them have a good time.

Xanthippe I'd rather die than be bawd to my husband.

Eulalia But just consider the case. Wasn't this far better than if she had
5 simply alienated her husband by her fury and spent her whole time in brawling?

Xanthippe It's the lesser evil, I admit – but I couldn't do it.

Eulalia I'll add one more example; and this will be the last. One day a
neighbour of ours, a good, honest man but a little short-tempered, beat his
10 wife, a most worthy woman. She withdrew to an inner room and there, weeping and sobbing, cried out her grief. Some time later her husband happened to go into that room and found her weeping. 'Why are you crying and sobbing here like a child?' he said. 'What?' she answered discreetly,
15 'Isn't it better to bewail my misfortune here than to scream in the street as other women usually do?'⁴⁵ The man's heart was so touched, so overcome by such wifely speech, that he solemnly promised her he would never lay a hand on her again, and he didn't.

Xanthippe I got the same promise from my husband by a different method.

Eulalia But meanwhile there's constant warfare between you.

Xanthippe What would you have me do, then?
20

Eulalia First of all, keep to yourself any wrong your husband does you and win him over gradually by favours, cheerfulness, gentleness. Either you'll triumph at last or certainly you'll find him much more affable than you do now.

Xanthippe He's too savage to soften under any favours.
25

Eulalia Oh, don't say that. No creature's so fierce that he can't be tamed. Don't despair of the man. Try for several months; blame me if you don't find this advice has helped you. There are even some failings you ought to wink at.⁴⁶ Above all, in my judgment, you must be careful not to start an argument
30 in the bedroom or in bed, but try to see that everything there is pleasant and agreeable. If that place, which is dedicated to dispelling grudges and renewing love, is profaned by any contention or bitterness, every means of recovering good will is clean gone. Some women are so peevish that they even quarrel and complain during sexual intercourse and by their
35 tactlessness render disagreeable that pleasure which ordinarily rids men's mind of whatever vexation may be therein – spoiling the very medicine that could have cured their ills.⁴⁷

Xanthippe That's often happened to me.

Eulalia Yet, even though a wife should always be careful not to offend
40 her husband on any occasion, she should take special pains to show herself wholly complaisant and agreeable to him in that union.

Xanthippe Husband! My business is with a monster.

Eulalia Do stop talking in that horrid fashion. Usually it's our fault that husbands are bad.⁴⁸ But to return to the subject. Those well read in ancient poetry say that Venus, whom they make the patroness of married love, has a girdle fashioned by Vulcan.⁴⁹ Woven in it is some drug to arouse love. She puts on this girdle whenever she's going to sleep with her husband.

Xanthippe That's a mere story.

Eulalia A story, yes, but hear what the story signifies.

Xanthippe Tell me.

- 10 **Eulalia** It teaches that a wife must take every precaution to be pleasing to her husband in sexual relations, in order that married love may be rekindled and renewed and any annoyance or boredom driven out of mind.⁵⁰

Xanthippe But where shall I get that girdle?

- Eulalia** You don't need sorcery or charms.⁵¹ No charm is more effective than
15 good behaviour joined with good humour.

Xanthippe I can't humour such a husband.

Eulalia Yet it's important to you that he stop being such. If by Circe's arts you could turn your husband into a swine or a bear,⁵² would you do it?

Xanthippe I don't know.

- 20 **Eulalia** Don't know? Would you rather have a swine than a man for a husband?

Xanthippe I'd prefer a man, of course.

Eulalia Well, now, what if by Circe's arts you could change him from drunk to sober, spendthrift to thrifty, idler to worker? Wouldn't you do it?

- 25 **Xanthippe** Indeed I would, but where can I find those arts?

- Eulalia** But you've those very arts in yourself if only you're willing to make use of them. He's yours whether you like it or not; that's settled. The better you make him, the better off you'll be. You have eyes only for his failings. These intensify your disgust, and with this handle you're simply catching
30 him where he can't be held. Mark the good in him, rather, and by this means take him where he *can* be held.⁵³ The time to weigh his faults was before you married him, since a husband should be chosen not only with eyes but with ears too.⁵⁴ Now's the time for improving him, not blaming him.

Xanthippe What woman ever picked a husband by ear?

- 35 **Eulalia** The one who sees nothing but good looks chooses him with her eyes. The woman who chooses by ear is the one who considers his reputation carefully.

Xanthippe Good advice – but too late.

- Eulalia** But it's not too late to try to improve your husband. If you present
40 your husband with a child, that will help.

Xanthippe I've already had one.

Eulalia When?

Xanthippe Long ago.

Eulalia How many months ago?

Xanthippe Almost seven.

5 **Eulalia** What do I hear? Are you reviving the old joke about the three-months' baby?⁵⁵

Xanthippe Not at all.

Eulalia You must be if you count the time from your wedding day.

Xanthippe Oh, no, we had some conversation⁵⁶ before marriage.

10 **Eulalia** Are children born from conversation?

Xanthippe Chancing to find me alone, he began to play, tickling me under the arms and in the sides to make me laugh. I couldn't stand the tickling, so I fell back on the bed. He leaned over and kissed me⁵⁷ – I'm not sure what else he did. I *am* sure my belly began to swell soon afterwards.

15 **Eulalia** Go on! Belittle a husband who begot children in sport? What will he do when he goes to work in earnest?

Xanthippe I suspect I'm pregnant now, too.

Eulalia Fine! A good ploughman's found a good field.⁵⁸

Xanthippe He's better at this than I would like.

20 **Eulalia** Few wives join you in that complaint. But were you engaged?

Xanthippe Engaged, yes.

Eulalia Then your sin was the lighter. Is the child a boy?

Xanthippe Yes.

Eulalia That will reconcile you two if you meet him halfway. What do others
25 – his friends and business associates – have to say about your husband?

Xanthippe They say he's very easy to get along with, cheerful, generous, a trusty friend.

Eulalia And this makes me confident he'll be the way we want him.

Xanthippe But to me alone he is different.

30 **Eulalia** Now behave towards him as I've told you, and call me Pseudolalia instead of Eulalia⁵⁹ if he doesn't begin to be such to you too. And just remember this: he's still a young man – not over twenty-four, I believe. He doesn't know yet what it's like to be head of a family. You must not even think of divorce.⁶⁰

35 **Xanthippe** But I've often thought of it.

Eulalia Whenever the notion comes into your head, consider within yourself, first of all, what a paltry thing a woman is if separated from her husband. A woman's highest praise is to be obedient to her husband. It's the order of nature, the will of God, that woman be entirely dependent on man.⁶¹ Only
40 think what the situation is: he's your husband; you can't get a different one. In the second place, think about the little boy you two have. What will you do

about him? Take him with you? You'll rob your husband of his possession. Leave him with your husband? You'll deprive yourself of the one dearest to you. Tell me, finally: have you any enemies?

5 **Xanthippe** I have a stepmother⁶² – the genuine article – and a mother-in-law just like her.

Eulalia Do they hate you so very much?

Xanthippe They'd like me to drop dead.

Eulalia Have a thought for them, too. How could you give them greater pleasure than by letting them see you parted from your husband, living like
10 a widow, nay worse than a widow? For widows may at least remarry.⁶³

Xanthippe Well, I like your advice, but a long-drawn-out job I don't like.

Eulalia But consider how much work it took before you taught this parrot here to talk.

Xanthippe Plenty, to be sure.

15 **Eulalia** And do you shrink from working hard to reform your husband, with whom you might spend your life pleasantly? How much labour men put into training a horse!⁶⁴ And shall we be hesitant about labouring to make our husbands more tractable?

Xanthippe What should I do?

20 **Eulalia** I've already told you. See that everything at home is neat and clean and there's no trouble that will drive him out of doors.⁶⁵ Show yourself affable to him, always mindful of the respect owed by wife to husband. Avoid gloominess and irritability. Don't be nasty or wanton.⁶⁶ Keep the house spick and span. You know your husband's taste; cook what he likes best. Be cordial
25 and courteous to his favourite friends, too. Invite them to dinner frequently, and see that everything is cheerful and merry there.⁶⁷ Finally, if he strums his guitar when he's a bit tipsy, accompany him with your singing. Thus you'll get your husband used to staying at home and you'll reduce expenses. At long last he'll think, 'I'm a damned fool to waste my money and reputation away
30 from home on a drab when I have at home a wife much nicer and much fonder of me, from whom I can get a more elegant and more sumptuous welcome.'

Xanthippe Do you think I'll succeed if I try?

Eulalia Look at me. I'll vouch for it, and meantime I'll approach your husband and remind him too of his duty.

35 **Xanthippe** I approve of the plan, but watch out he doesn't suspect this plot; he'd raise hell.⁶⁸

Eulalia Don't fear. I'll speak to him in such a roundabout way that he'll tell me himself what the trouble is between you. After that I'll draw him on very innocently, in my usual fashion and – I hope – make him more considerate
40 of you. When I get a chance, I'll tell him a fib about you – how lovingly you spoke of him.

Xanthippe May Christ favour our effort!
Eulalia He will – if only you do your part.

NOTES

- 1 Eulalia means 'sweetly speaking.' Xanthippe is named for the shrewish wife of Socrates; see 'The Godly Feast' 187:8–12 and n140.
- 2 Envy of other women's finery is considered in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 704F–705C. See 'The Council of Women' 909:22–910:14.
- 3 Erasmus notes elsewhere that anyone who sold cloth dyed in Britain for cloth dyed in Venice was liable to punishment (*Adagia* II i 1 LB II 403E).
- 4 Ineffectual simpleton, fool. See *Adagia* IV i 38, IV x 98.
- 5 1 Pet 3:3–4
- 6 *scropha*. The same epithet is used at 'The Epithalamium' 524:15–16.
- 7 *Uxor rixosa* will bring a man to an early grave (*De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 425D–E / ASD I-2 431:12–13 / CWE 25 147).
- 8 For woman is *animal natura loquax*; *Adagia* IV i 97. Erasmus says the same of his housekeeper. See the introduction to 'The Poetic Feast.'
- 9 Xanthippe resembles Chaucer's Wife of Bath until Eulalia shows her better ways of dealing with her husband.
- 10 Eph 5:22–4; 1 Pet 3:1; 1 Tim 2:11–12. 'For a wife to fight with her husband is to fight with God' (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 688B [the proof-text here is Gen 3:16]; see the whole passage 687D–688F).
- 11 1 Pet 3:6, referring to Gen 18:12. Cf *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 705C.
- 12 Eph 5:25–8. So *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 701D–704E; see especially 702B, 704B–C.
- 13 'Husbands do grievous wrong when they try to make servants of their wives' (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 686F).
- 14 *somnium hominis*; see 'The Master's Bidding' n5.
- 15 *Adagia* I vii 53
- 16 By canon law at this time, as for centuries earlier, legal separation of husband and wife was allowed for grave causes such as adultery, but a valid and consummated marriage could not be dissolved. Whatever infrequent exceptions were made, and by whom and for what reasons, does not concern us. Readers of this dialogue knew that divorce was virtually impossible and would have understood Eulalia's decisive reminder. Extraordinary cases, the most notorious of which in the last decade of Erasmus' lifetime was the effort by Henry VIII to get what is commonly called a divorce (but was technically a declaration of nullity) to dissolve his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, have nothing to do with the troubles of Xanthippe, however petulantly she protests the loss of her 'right.' She has no such right, as Eulalia emphasizes. Marriage was a sacrament, or was considered one (see 'The Godly Feast' n220); this is why Eulalia says marriage is indissoluble: 'Christ so willed.' Precedents and rules were collected in canon law for the governance of Christian marriage. Erasmus summarizes seventeen impediments to marriage in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (LB v 633E–642A), but necessarily the regulations dealt with external

facts: was adultery committed? did someone, perhaps unwittingly, marry within a prohibited degree of kinship? and so on. In his several extensive discussions of divorce, Erasmus presents other problems also, difficult because they could not be solved merely by legislation – mutual hatred, invincible incompatibility, forced marriages. His opinions on the emotional or psychic problems of marriage are interesting and typically humane.

While retaining some of the prescriptions of Mosaic law, canon law on marriage incorporated and expanded evangelical and Pauline precepts. Mosaic law (Deut 24:1–3) was more permissive than Christ's, which allowed a man to divorce his wife only for fornication. The essential texts are Matt 5:32 and 19:3–9. Matt 5:32 says, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, causes her to commit adultery; and whosoever marries her that is divorced commits adultery.' Some ancient Greek texts of Matt 19:9 have 'Whosoever puts away his wife except for fornication and marries another commits adultery'; other ancient texts add after 'fornication' 'makes her commit adultery'; still others read after 'commit adultery' 'and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.' This last reading is the Vulgate version and is kept in Erasmus' Greek text and Latin translation. His restatement of the verse in his Paraphrase on Matthew records his interpretation: 'Whosoever puts away his wife for whatever cause and marries another, as he himself commits adultery, so he gives his wife occasion for adultery; unless perchance she whom he repudiates has deserved rejection because of adultery' (LB VII 103D).

A very long note on 1 Cor 7:39 in the *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* (LB VI 692D–703D) contends first that certain patristic (and later) texts on marriage and remarriage seem to differ from the precepts of Christ and Paul (693A–694C). Moreover, canonists maintained that if a married person, before the marriage is consummated, makes a vow to enter a convent or monastery, the vow ends the marriage. (On the important distinctions among kinds of vows see 'A Fish Diet' 693:34–694:11, 697:21–699:1.) If a married person lapses into heresy, that ends a marriage even though the marriage is consummated (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 695A). But these are human, not divine, laws. Disputes and contradictions by canonists abound; papal pronouncements on marriage have contradicted one another (696E–697B). Christ's words in Matt 5:31–2 are interpreted in ways hard to reconcile with the text (697D–E). Paul makes concessions to human weakness by relaxing Christ's precepts on divorce. Why cannot the popes do likewise, since they do so in so many other matters (698D)? Human rules permit Christians to enter into marriage easily, yet marriage is declared indissoluble! Why do the church's regulations governing remarriage of divorced persons make it so difficult even for the innocent party to marry again (692E–F, 698E–699A)? Human constitutions – canon law, papal decrees – are too complex and rigid on divorce. They can forbid what neither nature nor divine law forbids (702E–703C).

For other expositions of these topics see *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* LB IX 262F–269E; *Supputatio* LB IX 572C–575A; and Allen Ep 1006:177–300 / CWE Ep 1006:186–321. Surtz *Praise of Wisdom* chapters 14–15 compares Erasmus' and More's opinions on divorce. G.G. Coulton *Medieval Panorama* (Cambridge 1939) chapter 46 is an informative introduction to marriage and divorce in the late Middle Ages.

Erasmus' *Institutio christiani matrimonii*, often cited in this colloquy and in the three preceding it, was written in 1526 at the request of the queen of England, Catherine of Aragon, and dedicated to her (Ep 1727). Some parts of it, including those on impediments (LB v 633D–642A) must have had an additional interest for those who read it after the king's attempts to have his marriage dissolved became known. How much Erasmus may have heard by 1526 or early 1527 about Henry's intention is uncertain, but we know something of his reactions to it between 1528 and 1533. He was opposed to the divorce, he thought marriage to a deceased brother's wife permissible, but whether this marriage could and would be nullified by papal dispensation he could not tell. As the case dragged on he was careful to keep up an appearance of neutrality. Writing an answer in 1532 to a tractate by one 'Phimostomus' (*Responsio ad disputationem de divortio* LB ix 955A–965D), he repeats that he had hoped by his note on 1 Cor 7:39 to persuade the church authorities to think about making changes in the laws of marriage, both with respect to preventing rash or irregular matches and to putting an end to such marriages that occurred. In 1533, replying to a correspondent who heard reports that Erasmus favoured the divorce (Allen Ep 2826:20–6), he wrote to deny the rumour. He had been fond of Henry VIII and knew many of his courtiers, but reminds the correspondent that he was an honorary councillor to his sovereign, Charles V (Allen Ep 2846:56–66). Prudence kept him discreetly noncommittal or evasive about the king's affair. See the introduction to Allen Ep 2846.

- 17 A wish (*superi male faxint*), not an assertion of fact as Telle has it (*Erasme et le septième sacrement* 350)
- 18 Matt 19:8–9, and see n16 above.
- 19 As Erasmus remarks in *Adagia* I iii 7, 'nothing is more trite nowadays than this Terentian aphorism' from *Phormio* 454.
- 20 'They should be noticed so that you may correct or diminish them, but not in such a way that you appear to dislike a friend' (*Adagia* II v 96).
- 21 Comity in marriage is a theme stressed in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 671C–673B. Cf Plutarch *Moralia* 138D *Coniugalia praecepta*. The image of being 'glued together' is also in Plutarch (138E).
- 22 Plutarch again, *Moralia* 138E. Erasmus' *Parabola*e has thirty-five aphorisms derived from the *Coniugalia praecepta*; for these see CWE 23 165:10–168:25. On Erasmus and the *Moralia* see 'The Godly Feast' n303 above.
- 23 With this statement and the examples that follow compare *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 673E–F; Plutarch *Moralia* 144D–E *Coniugalia praecepta* and 167C *De superstitione*; *Parabola*e CWE 23 168:19–22, 169:21–3.
- 24 *poppysmata*, clucking the tongue or smacking the lips (Juvenal 6.584); *palpum*, patting or stroking. So also *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 673F; *De pueris instituendis* ASD I-2 57:13–14 / CWE 26 327.
- 25 A young woman properly brought up will have learned about these matters from her parents. No knowledge is more essential for successful marriage (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 663A–E and *passim*).
- 26 The comparison is borrowed from Plutarch *Moralia* 139F *Coniugalia praecepta*; also in *Parabola*e CWE 166:27–9 and *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 674C–D. On a wife's accommodating herself to her husband's disposition see *ibidem* LB

- v 659B–C, 673C–675C; and 318:27–33, 320:20–31 below. Sensible women keep quiet when their husbands rage; when their husbands are silent, they calm them by comforting words (*Moralia* 143C *Coniugalia praecepta*).
- 27 When a wife admonishes a husband on a matter involving his reputation or welfare, he has a duty to listen to her (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 689B–C).
- 28 *Adagia* I viii 50. This advice is repeated in *De concordia* (1533) LB v 498c.
- 29 See n8 above and *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 626E.
- 30 The principle is the same if the husband has a complaint about his wife's behaviour, as the following story shows.
- 31 Plutarch advises husbands to be patient with the girlish outbursts of young wives and to overcome them with kindness (*Moralia* 138E *Coniugalia praecepta*). The story Eulalia now tells confirms the wisdom of this counsel, but the anecdote is especially notable because the patient husband was Thomas More. He is not named here, but the story fits the facts as intimated by Erasmus in a famous biographical sketch of More, written probably in 1519 (Ep 999; see particularly Allen lines 168–75 / CWE lines 180–8), and what we know of More from other sources, for instance about a practical joke in which he took part (see the colloquy 'Exorcism'). Identification of the couple in Eulalia's anecdote as More and his first wife was made by P.S. Allen (*Times Literary Supplement* 26 December 1918 page 654) and is accepted by biographers. This young wife was Jane Colt (c 1487–1511), eldest of three daughters of John Colt of Roydon in Essex. She was married to More in late 1504 or early 1505; hence Erasmus' statement that she was then seventeen is correct or nearly so. More was ten years older. His son-in-law, William Roper, assures us that More preferred the second daughter as 'fairest and best favoured' but, deciding that decorum would be ill served if the younger were married before the elder, chose Jane (*Life of More* 198–9). Erasmus spent many months in England in 1505–6 and on his next visit, in 1509, stayed in More's home.
- 32 *morum dexteritate*. 'Tastes' in line 28 is *mores*, and *morum*, *mores* may be puns on 'More,' 'Morus.'
- 33 But if a man prefers a wife who is already mature and educated, *iam formatam*, he will choose one near middle age, about thirty (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 665F).
- 34 *literis*, Latin letters
- 35 Allusions in the *Colloquies* to preaching and sermons are reminders of the prominence of preaching in sixteenth-century religion. On Erasmus' *Ecclesiastes* (LB v 770–1100), a major work, see 'Youth' n48. It is reported that one-eighth of the total production of printed books between 1460 and 1500 consisted of sermons (Rudolf Hirsch *Printing, Selling and Reading 1450–1550* [Wiesbaden 1967] 130). Repeating or taking notes on what had been heard in sermons was sometimes required of schoolboys. More's daughters remembered sermons and were keen critics of preachers (Allen Ep 1233:130–7 / CWE Ep 1233:142–9). All women should be expected to remember sermons. Their husbands should examine them diligently in this exercise, which is bound to improve both understanding and memory, and the time will come when the wife will say 'How fortunate I am to have such a husband!' (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB

- v 691A–F). The husband in Eulalia's *exemplum*, therefore, is merely doing what any proper husband ought to do.
- 36 A subject of concern to writers on rearing children. One of the first rules in bringing up girls is to keep them from idleness, 'as though from the complete ruin of good behaviour' (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 716E). Idleness and wantonness are the chief dangers to chastity (Allen Ep 1233:106–7 / CWE Ep 1233:115–16).
- 37 *verberibus*; that is, should beat her. In Utopia husbands correct or chastise (*castigant*) their wives (*Utopia* Yale CWM 4 190:18). The verb implies corporal punishment, not merely reproof. Before marriage a girl should be warned by her parents to be complaisant and obedient to her husband (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 671E).
- 38 See 'Exorcism' 535:8–9, where this is said of the perpetrator of an elaborate practical joke, perhaps John Colt.
- 39 *Adagia* iv vii 35
- 40 about . . . kindness] Added in the September 1531 edition
- 41 This story of the man whose Griselda-like wife not only endured his infidelity with patience and without complaint but recovered his affection by her exemplary forbearance is a version of a widely distributed folk tale, the *femme sauvage* or *Wildfrau*. Plutarch deals briefly with the wife's dilemma, recommending that she hide her sorrow and show kindness (*Moralia* 140B *Coniugalia praecepta*). Virgil B. Heltzel ('Traces of a Wildfrau Story in Erasmus' *Philological Quarterly* 8 [1929] 348–54) believes Erasmus may have known a version of this story as it had been told in the late fourteenth-century *Ménagier de Paris*, a helpful and pleasant book on what a young wife ought to know and do. See the edition of Paris 1846 (repr Geneva 1966) 1 237–40; translation by Eileen Power, *The Goodman of Paris* (New York 1928) 188–91. Power's *Medieval People* (London 1929; repr 1939) devotes a chapter to the work. Erasmus' version is somewhat shorter than the French one, which the narrator says he heard from his father, but Erasmus gives no information about the source; it is simply a tale Eulalia too has heard, and she uses it effectively. Probably the most familiar version, closely resembling Erasmus', is the thirty-eighth *nouvelle* in the *Heptameron* of Margaret of Navarre (1492–1549). The *Heptameron* was first printed in 1558. See the translation by Paul A. Chilton (London 1984). This tale appears at least twice in Tudor dress. Edmund Tilney's *Brief and pleasant discourse of duties in mariage, called the flower of friendship* (1568; STC 24076) uses it (E5–6) and borrows a few other passages from 'Marriage.' In his long poem *Albions England* (1586 and later), William Warner turned the story into verse, enlarging it and making a few changes in the plot. It was added to the third edition of 1592 (STC 25081) book 8, chapter 42, pages 182–4. In an essay on 'Erasmé et la femme sauvage' in his *Recherches érasmiques* 98–128, J.-C. Margolin, analysing Erasmus' story and some of its known analogues, considers its anthropological character and structural components as well as its literary history. His argument, engaging difficult norms and nuances of criticism, is not easy to summarize, but he suggests that Erasmus' treatment of the tale has affinities with what is called 'Mannerist' or 'Baroque' art and literature. He prints a versified adaptation of the story, in French, published in 1541.

- 42 Here the wife is even more charitable, the husband even more at fault, than in the preceding story. No source for this anecdote has been found.
- 43 Borrowed from Terence *Eunuchus* 859
- 44 The historical Xanthippe, wife of Socrates, is said to have been so angry when he brought another philosopher home to supper that she deliberately upset the table (see the reference in n1 above). On another occasion, after an argument, she drenched Socrates with water (Diogenes Laertius 36).
- 45 Disgraceful as it is for man and wife to embrace or kiss in public, it is still more disgraceful for them to argue in the presence of others (Plutarch *Moralia* 139E *Coniugalia praecepta*).
- 46 *Adagia* I viii 50; see n28 above.
- 47 This admonition is emphasized in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 674F–675C. Plutarch made the same point in *Moralia* 143D–E *Coniugalia praecepta*.
- 48 In ‘The Godly Feast’ (187:19–21) we are told that it is usually the husband’s fault if a wife is bad.
- 49 The girdle or *cestus* of Aphrodite (Venus), described in Homer *Iliad* 14.214–23; *Adagia* III ii 36; Plutarch *Moralia* 141C *Coniugalia praecepta*
- 50 Especially when the marriage is young (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 674E–F)
- 51 See ibidem LB v 683B–685A and Ruth Kelso *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana 1956) chapter 5.
- 52 An allusion to the story of Circe in *Odyssey* 10. See ‘Courtship’ n22.
- 53 On these expressions see *Adagia* I iv 4: *Ansam quaerere*.
- 54 *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 661A
- 55 In October 1525 Erasmus made a similar joke about Luther’s marriage but later acknowledged it was based on a false rumour (Allen Ep 1633:14–16 / CWE Ep 1633:17–19, Allen Ep 1677:1–2). Cf *Adagia* I vii 39.
- 56 *colloquium*. The double meaning holds in Latin as in English; cf ‘intercourse’ and ‘criminal conversation.’ There is another example at ‘The Old Men’s Chat’ 454:39–40.
- 57 Cf ‘Courtship’ 268:14–20 and nn87–8.
- 58 Plutarch uses the same figure in writing on this subject; *Moralia* 144B *Coniugalia praecepta*.
- 59 ‘False-speaking’ instead of ‘sweet speaking’; see n1 above.
- 60 Cf 311:34–6 and n16 above. The force of the sentence ‘You must not even think of divorce’ is stronger than may appear at first: ‘You must not even dream of such a wild, impossible thing as divorce.’
- 61 1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:22–3. Sound doctrine according to Scripture, custom, and law, yet not so absolute or so harsh as it may seem. Erasmus is careful to define the prerogatives of the wife as well as those of the husband. ‘The wife owes much reverence to the husband, but he in turn owes some reverence to her’ (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 694F). Their respective roles, inside and outside the home, must be understood clearly and accepted by each with good will and common sense (ibidem LB v 695A–697B).
- 62 Proverbially unfriendly and cruel to her stepchildren. See *Adagia* II ii 95; Plutarch *Moralia* 143A *Coniugalia praecepta*. In *Septem sapientium convivium* (147C) and *De tranquillitate animi* (467C) Plutarch tells a story liked by later writers – including Erasmus (*Parabola* CWE 23 205:17–19) – of a man who threw a stone

at a dog but missed and hit his stepmother. 'Not so bad after all,' he said. On the stepmother as a useful commonplace see *Ecclesiastes* LB v 930B, 968B, 977E. More's second wife, Dame Alice, was an exception to the stereotype, and More thought this fact worth recording in the verses attached to an epitaph he composed in 1532 and placed in the More family chapel in Chelsea Old Church, where it may still be read. For an illustration see E.E. Reynolds *The Field is Won: The Life and Death of Saint Thomas More* (London 1968) plate 22. For the text of the epitaph see Allen Ep 2831:73–131; on Dame Alice, 'as devoted to her stepchildren as to her own, a rare distinction in a stepmother,' see lines 123–4 of More's letter.

63 1 Cor 7:39

64 Complaint that many men devote more time to care of animals than to persons for whom they are responsible can be traced to Plato *Apology* 20B–C. Erasmus uses it in *Antibarbari* (ASD I-1 53:8–11 / CWE 23 29:36–30:4); *De pronuntiatione* (LB I 915E / ASD I-2 18:144–9 / CWE 26 372); *De pueris instituendis* (LB I 497F–498A / ASD I-2 40:32–41:16 / CWE 26 313); *Institutio principis christiani* (LB IV 562E–563A / ASD IV-1 139:90–100 / CWE 27 208); *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (LB V 714E).

65 The practical advice in this paragraph is expanded in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 673F–675C. Plutarch emphasizes the importance of cheerfulness (*Moralia* 142A *Coniugalia praecepta*).

66 *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 693E–697A

67 Readiness to entertain a husband's friends is one of many moral 'places' or topics a preacher can use (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 1035D–E). Plutarch even advises that a wife should not make friends of her own; it is enough for her to share her husband's pleasure in his friends (*Moralia* 140C–D *Coniugalia praecepta*).

68 Literally 'mix sea and sky' (*Adagia* I iii 81), that is, turn everything upside down

THE SOLDIER AND THE CARTHUSIAN

Militis et Cartusiani

First printed in the August 1523 edition.

Contrasting of vocations, in particular those of the active and contemplative lives, had a long history in Christian literature. Erasmus seldom missed an opportunity to satirize soldiers or to attack their wickedness. On monks his judgments varied. He devoted more pages to their failings than to their virtues, and he questioned certain orthodox ideas and official claims about monasticism (see the introduction to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage'). But he did know good monks, and for this reason 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' is a useful corrective to readers' first impressions. That some monks bring discredit to their order is no excuse for overlooking the better kind (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 1068E).

Carthusians were generally regarded as the most austere of the older orders. Erasmus was on good terms with those in Basel (Allen Ep 1805:289–90). Carthusians professed to have very high standards, which one had a right to expect them to uphold (*Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* [1525] LB IX 803D–E). So Erasmus remarks, but it is noticeable that this sentiment occurs in a defence against one of his bitterest and most vexatious critics, Pierre Cousturier, a Carthusian whom he mocks in the colloquy 'A Meeting of the Philological Society.' An English monk against whom More defended Erasmus' New Testament was a Carthusian (Knowles ROE III 469). Characterization of Carthusians as 'men wholly dead to the world' is taken by some as typical of Erasmus' esteem for them (Allen Epp 1196:425n, 1353:174n; ASD I-3 314:1n). Perhaps, but he could be critical as well (see *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 740A, D, and elsewhere; cf 803D–804A). The phrase 'dead to the world' has an ironic ring in 'The Old Men's Chat' 457:8–10, and the comment of the speaker there that some Carthusians have addled wits (457:15–17; cf LB IX 740A) is repeated by the fishmonger (not an unprejudiced observer, to be sure) in 'A Fish Diet' 717:1–3. On this irony see E.V. Telle 'Le Chartreux du colloque *Militis et Cartusiani* et Erasme' BHR 55 (1993) 231–43; see also Knowles ROE III 223. Folly in *Moriae encomium* praises Carthusian piety, but her sentence ends with teasing ambiguity (LB IV 485E–486A / ASD IV-3 176:848–52 / CWE 27 140). Yet one Carthusian we hear of, Levinus Ammonius, gratefully acknowledged his spiritual debt to Erasmus' religious writings: 'Christ taught me through Erasmus' (Allen Ep 2062 introduction; on Ammonius, see Allen Ep 1463 introduction and CEBR). Erasmus was not yet acquainted with him when this colloquy was printed.

Virtuous and sincere as the monk in this dialogue undeniably is, he is a Carthusian of Erasmian principles and tastes. He can hardly be said to possess the profound spirituality or remoteness from the world that one might expect in a member of his order. His talk suggests a life given more to quiet study than to devotional exercises; he stresses the special pleasantness and security of monastic life rather than its strictness. In his defence of this colloquy Erasmus says it shows that without pleasure in studies monastic life would be sad and disagreeable ('The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1102:15–18). When trying a year later to dissuade a Carthusian from leaving his monastery he reminded the man of the books and opportunities for leisurely study afforded there (Allen Ep 1887:23–30). See also *Vita Hieronymi* (Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 145:308–17 / CWE 61 29).

By contrast with the soldier, at any rate, the Carthusian has much to be complacent about. This mercenary is a debauched, reckless, sinful adventurer, of a kind well known to Erasmus in Switzerland and sometimes met in his pages. His prototype is Thrasymachus in 'Military Affairs.' Both soldier and monk may have had originals (Smith *Key* 17–18), but Erasmus knew so many of both kinds that it is impossible to say with confidence which individuals, if any, he had in mind.

Pascal in *Pensées* has a brief comparison of a soldier and a Carthusian (section 7 no 539), which may have been prompted by this colloquy, but takes a strikingly different view of the soldier's and monk's situations. A Spanish translation of the dialogue was made by Alonso Ruiz de Virués (1529). Bataillon detects echoes of this colloquy in Diego Mu nez Alba's *Diálogos de la vida del soldado* (1532); see *Erasme et l'Espagne* 321, 697. Some useful references are provided by Surtz *Praise of Wisdom* 112–14, 294–99.

SOLDIER, CARTHUSIAN

Soldier Hello, brother!

Carthusian And hello to you, dear brother!

5 **Soldier** I scarcely recognize you.

Carthusian Have I aged so much in two years' time?

Soldier No, but your shaven head and strange dress make you seem a different sort of creature.

Carthusian So you wouldn't recognize your wife if she met you in new
10 clothes?

Soldier Not if they were like yours.

Carthusian But I recognize *you* very well, though not only your dress but even your face and your whole physical appearance are changed. How many

colours are you painted with? No bird has such varied plumage. And then how slashed everything is, how unusual or outlandish! Add to that your haircut, half-shaven beard, and the tangled bush on your upper lip, sticking out on each side like a cat's whiskers.¹ Your face is marred by more than one wound;

5 you'd pass for one of the lettered men of Samos the proverb jokes about.²
Soldier Just the style for a returning soldier. But tell me: were good doctors so very scarce here?

Carthusian Why do you ask?

Soldier Because you didn't have one of them cure your brain fever before
 10 casting yourself into bondage.

Carthusian So you think I was mad?

Soldier Completely. What need was there to bury yourself here before your time when you could have lived agreeably in the world?

Carthusian I don't seem to you to live in the world now?

15 **Soldier** No, by Jove, you don't.

Carthusian Why, if you please?

Soldier Because you're not free to walk about wherever you like. You're shut up in this place as if in a cage. Besides, there's the tonsure, the unnatural dress, the solitude, the constant diet of fish; I marvel you're not turned into a
 20 fish.

Carthusian If men turned into everything they ate, your fondness for pork would have made you a pig long ago.

Soldier No doubt you've long since regretted joining an order, for I find few who don't.

25 **Carthusian** That happens to those who throw themselves into this mode of life as if into a well. I came to it gradually and deliberately, after self-examination and consideration of this whole system of life;³ I was already twenty-eight,⁴ when one is old enough to know one's own mind. As for the place, you too are confined to a narrow room, if you reflect
 30 upon the vastness of the world. Spaciousness doesn't matter so long as the comforts of life aren't lacking. Many men seldom or never leave the city in which they were born. Were they forbidden to step out of it they'd be most unhappy, and obsessed by an extraordinary longing to quit the city. This is the common mood, which I myself don't share. Here's the whole world, to
 35 my imagination,⁵ and this map⁶ shows the entire earth, over which I wander in thought more enjoyably and safely than one who sails to the new islands.⁷

Soldier In this belief you're close to the truth.

Carthusian You can't condemn my shaving when you voluntarily have your hair cut – for the sake of convenience, no doubt. If it does nothing else for
 40 me, shaving makes my head cleaner and perhaps healthier. At Venice how many nobles shave the whole head?⁸



A seated mercenary
Urs Graf, 1513
Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe

What's amazing in my dress? It covers my body, doesn't it? Clothing serves the double purpose of warding off the weather and covering what shame bids us conceal.⁹ Doesn't this clothing perform those functions? But the colour bothers you.¹⁰ What colour is more appropriate to all Christians than the one given to them all in baptism? You too were told, 'Receive the white garment.'¹¹ So this garment serves to remind me¹² of what I promised in baptism, namely an unremitting zeal for purity of heart.

Furthermore, if you call flight from the crowd¹³ solitude, the example was set not by us but by the ancient prophets, and the pagan philosophers, too, and whoever else were seekers after truth; nay, poets, astrologers,¹⁴ and others dedicated to similar arts habitually seek seclusion whenever they have some important and unusually demanding work in hand. But why call this solitude? The conversation of one dear friend dispels the tedium of solitude. Here I have more than sixteen companions in everything.¹⁵ Friends come here to visit oftener than I like or find convenient. And yet to you I seem to lead a lonely life?

Soldier But you aren't always permitted to chat with them.

Carthusian Nor is it always convenient to do so. And conversation is the more delightful and its pleasure increased by being intermittent.

Soldier You're not far wrong. Meat tastes better after Lent, I find.

Carthusian Yet when I seem especially solitary¹⁶ I'm nevertheless not without conversationalists¹⁷ far more witty and charming than the ordinary run of boon companions.

Soldier Where are they?

Carthusian You see this book¹⁸ of the Gospels. In it one talks with me who long ago, as an eloquent companion of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, caused them to forget the hardship of their journey but made their hearts burn most fervently in their wonder at his enchanting speech.¹⁹ In this book Paul speaks to me,²⁰ in this Isaiah and the rest of the prophets. Here the honey-tongued Chrysostom converses with me,²¹ here Basil,²² here Augustine,²³ here Jerome,²⁴ here Cyprian, and other teachers as learned as they are eloquent.²⁵ Do you know any other talkers so delightful that you would compare them with these? Or in such company, which never fails me, do you suppose solitude can become tedious?

Soldier To me they'd speak in vain. I wouldn't understand.

Carthusian Again, what difference does it make how this poor body is nourished? We can get along with very little if we live in accord with nature. Which of us looks fitter, you who eat partridges, pheasants, and capons, or I who live on fish?

Soldier If you had a wife, as I have, you'd have less energy.

Carthusian And therefore any sort of food, however scanty, is enough.

Soldier But in the meantime you lead a Jew's life.²⁶

Carthusian Do mind what you're saying, please. If we don't attain to the Christian life, at least we strive after it.

Soldier In dress, food, little prayers, and other rites you put your trust,²⁷
5 neglecting the pursuit of evangelical righteousness.

Carthusian What others may do is not for me to judge. For my part, I don't rely on these things; I set very little store by them, but I place my trust in purity of heart and in Christ.

Soldier Then why do you keep these customs?

10 **Carthusian** To be at peace with my brethren and to avoid being a stumbling block to any person in any respect. I wouldn't care to offend anybody for the sake of trivialities of this kind, which it is no trouble to observe. Though we're men whatever clothing we wear, conformity or nonconformity even in the slightest details promotes or destroys harmony.
15 The shaven head or colour of dress does not of itself²⁸ commend me to God. But what would people say were I to let my hair grow or wear your costume?²⁹

I've explained my choice to you. Now I ask you in turn to explain yours and to tell *me* when all good doctors disappeared. You left a young wife and
20 children at home and off you went to the army, hired for a trifling wage³⁰ to cut men's throats, and that at risk of your own life. For you were dealing with armed men, not toadstools or poppies. Which in truth do you think is more lamentable, to butcher a Christian³¹ – who never harmed you – for a little pay or to send yourself body and soul to eternal perdition?

25 **Soldier** It's lawful to kill an enemy.³²

Carthusian Maybe it is if he attacks your country. Then it does seem righteous to fight for wife and children, parents and friends, hearth and home,³³ and for civil peace. But what has this to do with your mercenary soldiering? Had you died in this war, I wouldn't have given a rotten nut³⁴
30 for your soul's chances.³⁵

Soldier No?

Carthusian No, so help me Christ! Now which do you think is harder, to obey the good man we call prior, who summons us to prayers, to the lesson in Sacred Scripture, to holy instruction, to the singing of God's praises in
35 psalms, or to take orders from some barbarous officer who often calls you out for long night marches wherever he pleases and orders you back again, who exposes you to bullets or commands you to stand your ground where it's either kill or be killed?

Soldier There are worse mischiefs than you mention.

40 **Carthusian** If I break the rules of this order, my punishment is an admonition or something equally light;³⁶ if you disobey the commander's orders, you

must hang or else be stripped and run a gauntlet of sharp spears;³⁷ for to have your head chopped off³⁸ is a favour.

Soldier I can't gainsay the truth.

Carthusian To judge by your clothes, now, you don't bring much money home.

Soldier I was broke long ago;³⁹ more than that, I'm in debt. So I've turned in here to get a viaticum from you.

Carthusian Would you had turned this way when you were running off to that accursed army! But why such poverty?

Soldier You ask why? Whatever I got by way of pay, booty, sacrilege, theft, and pillage was spent on wine, whoring, and dice.

Carthusian Wretched man! Meanwhile your dear wife, for whose sake God bade one leave father and mother,⁴⁰ was mourning at home, deserted, along with her little children.⁴¹ And did you imagine you were enjoying life in such great wretchedness and sin⁴² during that time?

Soldier Having so many partners in wrongdoing distorted my sense of wrong.⁴³

Carthusian Really, I'm afraid your wife won't recognize you.

Soldier How so?

Carthusian Because your scars have given you such a face-lifting. What's that gash in your forehead? It looks as if a horn had been cut out.

Soldier On the contrary, if you knew the facts you would congratulate me on this wound.

Carthusian Why?

Soldier I came very close to getting killed.

Carthusian What was the trouble?

Soldier A steel crossbow⁴⁴ broke while being aimed and a piece of it lodged in my forehead.

Carthusian And on your cheek you've a scar longer than the palm of your hand.

Soldier A combat wound.

Carthusian Battle?

Soldier No, a fight broke out in a dice game.

Carthusian Well, I notice some sort of ornaments on your chin, too.⁴⁵

Soldier That's nothing.

Carthusian I suspect you picked up what they call the Spanish pox.

Soldier A good guess, brother; the third time I nearly died of it.

Carthusian What mishap makes you walk so stooped, like a man of ninety, or as though you were some reaper or were crippled by a cudgel?⁴⁶

Soldier The disease contracted the joints.

Carthusian A splendid transformation indeed you've experienced! You

were once a cavalryman; now you've become a semicreeping⁴⁷ creature instead of a centaur.

Soldier The chances of war.

Carthusian No, it's your own folly. What prizes do you bring home to your wife and children? Leprosy (since that pox is nothing but a kind of leprosy)? Unless it's not to be shunned because it's widespread, particularly among the nobility. Yet for this very reason it ought to be shunned all the more. Now you'll infect with this disease those who ought to be most precious to you, and you yourself will go through life a rotten corpse.

10 **Soldier** Stop it, brother, please! I've troubles enough even without the added sting of your rebuke.

Carthusian How large a part of your troubles have I mentioned? These are merely the physical ones. But what kind of a soul do you bring back? Rotten with how many diseases? Torn by how many wounds?

15 **Soldier** I bring it back as pure as the Paris sewer in the Place Maubert,⁴⁸ or a public latrine.

Carthusian I fear it's much more offensive in the sight of God and his angels.⁴⁹

Soldier But we've had enough of dispute for the present. Say something about making up a viaticum.

Carthusian I've nothing to give. I'll find out what the prior may be willing to do.

Soldier Your hand would be quick to accept a contribution. Now, when it comes to counting out something, many obstacles block the way.

25 **Carthusian** What others may do must be their own affair. I've no hands either for giving or receiving. But we'll see about these matters after lunch; time now to sit down at table.

NOTES

- 1 Soldiers commonly wore tall plumes, sometimes of ostrich feathers, on their helmets or caps, as the pope's Swiss Guards still do. More than once Erasmus mentions this and other distinctive features of military fashion; see for example *De concordia* LB v 483B–C; *Ecclesiastes* 940B, 909E. To be 'plum'd like estridges' (1 *Henry iv* 4.1.98) and 'bearded like the pard' (*As You Like It* 2.7.150) was correct for the military throughout the sixteenth century; 'slashed' refers to the vertical slashes cut into garments so that undergarments of a different colour would show through. The style of this soldier's clothing is the same as that recommended by Nestor in 'The Knight without a Horse' 882:12–13. Drawings, engravings, woodcuts in printed books, and paintings by Holbein, Dürer, Urs Graf, and many lesser artists make the Swiss mercenary's and German Landsknecht's garish uniforms a familiar sight for modern readers. Frederic

Stibbert's *Civil and Military Clothing in Europe* (New York 1968) is a convenient introduction; see 176, 178–9 there. For other satirical allusions to soldiers' dress in the *Colloquies* see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 477:28–33 and 480:4–15, 'Cyclops' 865:12–18. Their fashion was copied by some civilians, an affectation that gave offence to puritans. See J.M. Vincent *Costume and Conduct in the Laws of Basel, Bern, and Zurich 1370–1800* (Baltimore 1935).

- 2 'Lettered' because branded on the forehead by their Athenian captors. See Plutarch *Pericles* 26.3–4; Erasmus *Adagia* iv vi 14 and *De pronuntiatione* LB I 968A / ASD I-4 103:10 / CWE 26 475.
- 3 'Our religion is straitt,' wrote the prior of the Carthusian house of Mountgrace in Yorkshire in 1523, the year when this colloquy was printed, adding that anyone wishing to enter it 'shuld exersice hym a yere or two in the straitnes theroff' (*Clifford Letters of the Sixteenth Century* ed A.G. Dickens, Surtees Society 172 [Durham and London 1962] 68–9). As a young man Thomas More had lived a religious life, though without vows, for about four years at the London Charterhouse.
- 4 Gaspar in 'Youth' declares he will not commit himself to a career or profession before he is twenty-eight. In 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' Catharine, who is insistent on entering a convent, is still sixteen; her decision is a mistake. On his deathbed Cornelius in 'The Funeral' tells his wife not to permit their children to decide on a course of life too early (778:32–4). Erasmus' unrelenting opposition to allowing persons to take monastic vows when they were too young to commit themselves irrevocably is reflected in these passages. He was pleased, he told Cardinal Wolsey, that his *Colloquies* warned readers of this danger (Allen Ep 1697:62–4).

Twenty-eight was a decisive age because it was reckoned the dividing line between youth and maturity. Latin terms descriptive of the ages of life were inexact, in classical as in later times. Thus *puer* could apply to a boy until he was seventeen but often until he was older. He could be called *adulescens* until twenty-eight or even until forty. Traditionally the ages were counted by periods of seven years each. Infancy could pass into childhood when one was seven, childhood to adolescence at fourteen, adolescence to youth at twenty-one, youth to manhood at twenty-eight. Hence the Carthusian's remark that when he joined the order he was mature enough to know his own mind. If such age-divisions are used strictly, Gaspar in 'Youth' is a boy, not a youth. But usage was not precise or consistent. In his poem 'on the troubles of old age' (1506) Erasmus writes with melancholy eloquence of the arrival of old age and its attendant misfortunes (CWE 85–6 12–25, 412–39 no 2 / *Reedijk Poems of Erasmus* 283–90 no 83); he was then about forty. In 1518 he congratulates himself on having passed his fiftieth year, something few people have achieved (Allen Ep 867:270–2 / CWE Ep 867:291–2). Yet in 1523 he is indignant because someone has written of him – 'a man not yet sixty' – as though he were doddering on the brink of the grave (Allen I 12:4–5 / CWE Ep 1341A:398–9). Many of the references to age in texts until the seventeenth century or later are puzzling merely because the notion of 'middle age' or 'middle-aged' was uncommon. In the usage of Erasmus' time it was possible to speak or write without absurdity of becoming mature at twenty-eight and reaching old age about forty. On these and related topics see Creighton Gilbert 'When Did a

- Man in the Renaissance Grow Old?' *Studies in the Renaissance* 14 (1967) 7–32. Cf Bierlaire *Les Colloques d'Erasmus* 49 n3 and see 'The Funeral' n97.
- 5 *De contemptu mundi* has a chapter (11) on the pleasures of the monk's solitary life (LB V 1257A–1261B / ASD V-1 73–82 / CWE 66 165–72), terming these the true Epicureanism; on 'true' and 'false' Epicureanism see the final colloquy, 'The Epicurean.'
 - 6 *tabula*, a drawing or (as at 'A Fish Diet' 686:18–19) painting, not a globe (as at 'The Godly Feast' 205:30). Cf 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 479:23. Erasmus was interested in geography and assigned it a place in liberal education because of its usefulness in the study of history and literature (*De ratione studii* CWE 24 673:19–24). He wrote the preface to the first printed edition of the Greek text of Ptolemy's *Geographica* (Basel 1533); Allen Ep 2760. See A. De Smet 'Erasmus et la cartographie' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* 1 277–91.
- The Carthusian's preference for maps instead of actual travel recalls Horace's 'Caelum, non animum, mutant qui trans mare currunt' (*Epistles* 1.11.27). Glycion in 'The Old Men's Chat' shares the Carthusian's opinion (453:24–32). So do others, for instance Elyot in *The Governour* (1531) chapter 11: 'What incredible delite . . . to knowe the sondry maners and conditions of people, and the varietie of their natures . . . without perill of the see, or daunger of longe and paynfull iournayes' (Everyman's Library [London and New York 1907; repr 1937] 43). 'I never travelled but in map or card,' Burton confesses (*Anatomy of Melancholy* 'Democritus Junior to the Reader' [1 18]; Burton was well read in Erasmus). Although he travelled more than most men of his time and vaguely commends those ancient exemplars, Solon and Ulysses, Erasmus was as mindful of the perils as of the benefits of travel. Ulysses is immortal in literature for his voyages, yet the greatest of medieval poets places him in hell (Dante *Inferno* 26). There is nothing inherently commendable either in moving about or in staying in one place for a lifetime; what matters is the quality of the life (Allen Ep 809:155–62 / CWE Ep 809:175–82).
- 7 The only other allusions to discoveries and the 'new islands' (the Americas) in the *Colloquies* are in 'The Old Men's Chat' 453:31–2, 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 479:21–480:21, and 'A Fish Diet' 686:18–28. Relatively few allusions to the discoveries occur in Erasmus' other writings, but see Allen Ep 586:181–93 / CWE Ep 586:203–14; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 814A–D, 1175A; *Spongia* LB X 1653f. When we consider the number and importance of the discoveries made in the previous thirty years, the paucity of allusions in the *Colloquies* may seem surprising, but the impact of the Americas on the European mind for half a century after Columbus' voyages was less than is sometimes assumed. The news of his discovery caused much excitement – his letter announcing it was printed nine times in 1493 and twenty times by 1500 – and his feat was extravagantly praised. Yet, as J.H. Elliott writes, 'against these signs of awareness must be set the no less striking signs of unawareness of the importance both of the discovery of America and of its discoverer . . . It seems that the European reading public displayed no overwhelming interest in the newly-discovered world of America.' On this theme see Elliott's *The Old World and the New 1492–1650* (Cambridge 1971) chapter 1; the sentences quoted are on pages 10 and 12. See also his article 'Renaissance Europe and America: A Blunted Impact' in *First Images of America* ed Fredi Chiappelli, 2 vols (Berkeley, Los

Angeles, London 1976) 111–23; and Rudolf Hirsch ‘Printed Reports on the Early Discoveries and Their Reception’ in the same work II 537–59. On ideological consequences of early discoveries, which took time to emerge, see A. Dupront ‘Espace et humanisme’ BHR 8 (1946) 7–104. The ease with which a later public in 1969 turned to its daily concerns after the initial reaction to news that men had landed on the moon may serve, *mutatis mutandis*, to make European attitudes towards Columbus’ accomplishment more credible.

Erasmus met Ferdinand Columbus, son of the navigator, in Louvain in October 1520 and inscribed for him a copy of *Antibarbari* (Allen Ep 1147 introduction). One would like to believe that Erasmus had read or at least examined Peter Martyr’s *De orbe novo* (1511), the first history of the New World, but there is no evidence that he did so.

- 8 As Erasmus had no doubt noticed during his residence there for some months in 1508.
- 9 The Erasmian ‘philosophy of clothes’ is found in ‘The Well-to-do Beggars.’ In *Moriae encomium* Folly jests at monastic costume (LB IV 472A / ASD IV-3 160:538–52 / CWE 27 131).
- 10 The Carthusian habit is white.
- 11 After the salting at the church door, priest and people enter the church and go to the font for the rest of the ceremony (on the rite see ‘The Godly Feast’ 196:13–19 with the notes). In the ancient rite a white robe was put on the child, the priest saying ‘Receive the white garment, which mayest thou carry without stain before the judgment seat of the Lord Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have eternal life.’ In modern times a white cloth or veil called the ‘chrism cloth’ is placed on the child’s head; chrism is consecrated oil used in unction at baptism and confirmation. The garment or chrism cloth symbolized the innocence of those who ‘have put on Christ’ (Gal 3:27; Rom 13:14). See *De contemptu mundi* LB V 1262E–F / ASD V-1 85:233–86:236 / CWE 175; *De puritate tabernaculi* LB V 302F–303A; *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1308F–1309A / ASD V-1 372:798–801; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1136F–1137A, 1137D / ASD V-1 211:150, 212:184–8; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1025A. On the ancient and later practices consult Louis Duchesne *Christian Worship* trans M.L. McClure, 3rd ed (London 1910) 314, 316; Adrian Fortescue *The Ceremonies of the Roman Rite Described* (London 1918) 393–6; NCE II 60–1. On chrismation in the ancient rite of confirmation see J.N.D. Kelly *Early Christian Doctrines* 5th rev ed (London 1977) 432–6.
- 12 *admonet me*. The monk makes no claim that monastic vows constitute a ‘second baptism,’ an assumption Erasmus rejected. See ‘The Girl with No Interest in Marriage’ n57.
- 13 The Carthusian prizes retirement or withdrawal as opportunity for study and religious meditation, not for idleness. His is the right use of *otium*, which is for thinkers rather than doers (Cicero *De officiis* 1.69–70). The pleasures of such an existence as this Carthusian’s, occupied with Scripture and the Fathers, are praised by Erasmus in *De contemptu mundi* (LB V 1260B–E / ASD V-1 80:92–120 / CWE 66 170–1). Bishops and priests praise *otium*, but their lives are taken up with business, *negotium* (*De pronuntiatione* LB I 922C–D / ASD I-4 30:532–43 / CWE 26 386). The prospect of quiet leisure for studies – pagan as well as sacred literature – reconciled Erasmus at first to his own monastic life at Steyn, but he was later disillusioned (*Compendium vitae* CWE 4 407:93–104; Allen Ep

447:296–447 / CWE Ep 447:323–489; and see the introduction to ‘The Girl with No Interest in Marriage’ 282–3). Erasmus’ clerical critic Josse Clichtove argued that monks must be studious – a reminder that monks too could be humanists and, so Clichtove’s biographer contends, that Erasmian humanism was not the only kind (J.-P. Massaut *Josse Clichtove, l’humanisme et la réforme du clergé* 2 vols [Paris 1968] I 360–4, 438–41).

- 14 ‘Astrology’ was an ambiguous term. Insofar as it was mathematical and concerned with astronomy and cosmology, astrology was a respectable and very ancient study. In its manifestations as a pseudoscience of prediction or horoscopes, of astral influence or determination of human traits and events, it was rejected on moral and theological grounds by some who, like Pico della Mirandola in his famous attack, *Disputationes adversus astrologiam* (1495), condemned it as destructive of human freedom. In the time of Erasmus opinions on ‘judicial’ astrology were divided. Popes Julius II and Leo X took it seriously sometimes (see E. Rodocanachi *Histoire de Rome: le pontificat de Jules II 1503–1513* [Paris 1928] 8n, 79n and *Le pontificat de Léon X 1513–1521* [Paris 1931] 41). Luther rejected it, as had Thomas Aquinas; Melancthon was not so sure. All the evidence suggests that many persons accepted it, whether partially, sceptically, or superstitiously – or metaphorically, as we ourselves do, for it still has a place in the literary imagination.

Erasmus himself had no patience with belief that ‘the stars ... govern our conditions’ (*King Lear* 4.3.34–5). ‘We should seek on earth what can make us happy or unhappy,’ he says, and rather than ponder the aspects of the planets, weigh carefully those with whom we associate (Allen Ep 1005:1–14 / CWE Ep 1005:3–13; cf ‘Sympathy’ 1046:9–13). He includes ‘astrology’ (astronomy) among the arts (*De pronuntiatione* LB I 915A / ASD I-4 16:109, 31:563–5 / CWE 26 371, 387) but is scornful about astrological prognostications, a nuisance to princes (*Panegyricus* LB IV 509E, 543B–C / ASD IV-1 30:121–7, 83:870–6 / CWE 27 11, 65; *Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 586A / ASD IV-1 177:340–2 / CWE 27 247–8). Cf *Moriae encomium* LB IV 434B / ASD IV-3 111:742–5 / CWE 27 107; the colloquy ‘Echo’ 799:35–6; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 825F; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1181F, 1187A / ASD V-1 295:627–30, 303:898–900; *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1305B / ASD V-1 364:596–8. In 1519 he writes ironically to a friend of having consulted astrologers on the decline of literature (Allen Ep 948:15–26 / CWE Ep 948:16–27). He printed a translation of Lucian’s *De astrologia* in the 1514 edition of his and More’s *Lucian*.

Consult Thorndike *Magic and Experimental Science* volumes IV–VI on the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; D.C. Allen *The Star-Crossed Renaissance* (Durham NC 1941); Wayne Shumaker *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance* (Berkeley 1972) chapter 1; Sem Dresden *Humanism and the Renaissance* trans Margaret King (New York and Toronto 1968) 70–6 for a good summary of the relation of astrology to humanism, but the entire chapter (11–107) should be read. Eugenio Garin *Astrology and the Renaissance* trans Carolyn Jackson (London 1983) is a more recent contribution.

- 15 According to Peter the Venerable, in the earliest Carthusian monasteries the number of monks was fixed at thirteen, plus eighteen lay brothers (*De miraculis* 2.28 PL 189 944C). The London Charterhouse in 1531 had thirty monks, eighteen lay brothers (Knowles ROE III 225n).

- 16 Solitude and silence were essential parts of Carthusian discipline. For praise of *tranquillitas*, *externa quies*, and *interna quies* afforded by monastic existence, see *De contemptu mundi* LB v 1254A–1257A / ASD v-1 66:751–73:924 / CWE 66 159–65.
- 17 So Erasmus writes to the monk he tried in 1527 to dissuade from leaving the monastery (Allen Ep 1887:25–7).
- 18 *codex*; earlier ‘manuscript’ but here probably a printed book. The word was often synonymous with *liber*, as William Horman notes in 1519; he says that *volumen*, *liber*, *codex* were used indifferently in his day although there were, strictly speaking, distinctions (*Vulgaria* ed M.R. James [Oxford 1926] 124–7). See ‘The Godly Feast’ n260.
- 19 Luke 24:13–32
- 20 On Erasmus’ enthusiasm for Paul see ‘Youth’ n17, ‘The Godly Feast’ 189:35–6 and n166.
- 21 Luther said it was Chrysostom’s garrulity that attracted Erasmus (wa *Tischreden* 2 no 2544a). On this mark of Chrysostom’s style see Allen Ep 1790:28–30.
- 22 G. Chantraine ‘Erasmus et saint Basile’ *Irénikon* (Monastère Bénédictin, Chevetogne, Belgium) 4 (1979) 451–90 is a good appraisal.
- 23 Excellent, but not to be compared with the Greeks. Of the Latins, Ambrose, Hilary, and Cyprian were more learned (Ep 898). Augustine’s influence on Erasmus’ religious opinions is emphasized by Charles Béné *Erasmus et saint Augustin* (Geneva 1969), though claims for comparable influence on his ideas of education are exaggerated (Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* 1 157–79).
- 24 Esteemed by Erasmus above all other Latin Fathers. As the fount and exemplar of biblical scholarship and interpretation for the medieval church in the West, Jerome was the patron saint of Erasmus and of all cultivators of what Erasmus liked to call *bonae literae*. For comparison of Jerome and Augustine see Erasmus *Vita Hieronymi* (Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 167:905–7, 180:1231–181:1276, 185:1390–9, 186:1400–187:1461 / CWE 61 45, 53–4, 57, 57–9); Epp 326, 396 (dedicatory prefaces to his edition of Jerome; all of Ep 326 is translated in CWE 61 83–97) and Allen Ep 844:120–271 / CWE Ep 844:132–276. Erasmus’ preference for Jerome and Luther’s equally emphatic preference for Augustine were early recognized by Luther as a significant difference between his theology and that of Erasmus. See Luther’s letter to Georgius Spalatinus of 19 October 1516 (wa *Briefwechsel* 1 70–1 Ep 27). Jerome was ‘a babbler, like Erasmus’ (wa *Tischreden* 4 or Clemen 8 no 5009, from 1540). Erasmus was not uncritical of Jerome, yet in his editorial and exegetical labours Jerome was his inspiration; of all the Latin Fathers Jerome knew Scripture best. For some typical comments see Allen Epp 141:16–49, 335:220–95 / CWE Epp 141:18–55, 335:229–310; *Ecclesiastes* LB v 903C–D; and Denys Gorce (n25 below) 260–76. In certain respects Cyprian was a better writer than Jerome (Allen Ep 1000:86–103 / CWE Ep 1000:87–105) but not more learned. Both took pains, as Augustine did, to be intelligible to readers who were not learned. Aquinas and Scotus instruct but do not move us; Basil and Chrysostom do both (*De vidua christiana* LB v 760A / CWE 66 246). Erasmus often lamented that modern churchmen neglected the study of the Fathers (as in ‘The Sermon’ 948:32–8). On Erasmus and Jerome see further CWE 61 xiii–xxxvii and Eugene F. Rice Jr *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore and London 1985), especially chapter 5.

- 25 The Fathers named by the monk were favourites of Erasmus too, but not these alone: 'Comparisons are odious; they were all great men, but there is an order of greatness' (Allen and *CWE* Ep 898:8–9). Erasmus' editions, annotations, and translations of the Fathers and of the New Testament were his principal contributions to Christian scholarship. No other scholar of his time edited, supervised, or translated so many important patristic texts: an edition of Jerome's letters in 1516 (see Ep 396); an edition of Cyprian in 1520 (Ep 1000); supervision of Vives' edition of Augustine's *De civitate Dei* in 1522 (Ep 1309); editions of Arnobius the Younger (*editio princeps*) in 1522 (Ep 1304); of Hilary in 1523 (Ep 1334); of Irenaeus (*editio princeps*) in 1526 (Ep 1738); editions and translations of various works by Chrysostom in 1525–33, some of these reprinted in the five-volume Latin Chrysostom issued by Froben in 1530 (Epp 1558, 1563, 1661, 1734, 1800, 1801, 1841, 1856, 2093, 2359, 2774); translations of Athanasius in 1527 (Ep 1790); an edition of Ambrose in 1527 (Epp 1855, 2190); of Augustine in 1529 (Ep 2157); of a treatise by Lactantius in 1529 (Ep 2103); of Basil in 1532 (Epp 229, 2617, 2643, and see Ep 2611); a Latin edition of Origen in 1527, 1536 (Epp 1844, 3131); of an epistle of Eucherius (Ep 676). He supervised the publication of Willibald Pirckheimer's translations from Gregory Nazianzen in 1531 (Ep 2493). The history of these editorial labours can be learned from the prefaces and notes in Allen. For a convenient summary see Allen *Lectures* 30–59; or see Denys Gorce 'La patristique dans la réforme d'Erasmus' *Festgabe Joseph Lortz* ed Erwin Iserloh and Peter Manns, 2 vols (Baden-Baden 1958) I 233–76. Despite what he said in Ep 898 (quoted above), Erasmus makes interesting comparisons of the Fathers in many places. On their characteristics as writers see *Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 132F–133B; *Antibarbari* LB X 1736E–F / ASD I-1 124:19–125:10 / *CWE* 23 105:19–34; *Ciceronianus* LB I 1007C–1008B / ASD I-2 659:18–660:28 / *CWE* 28 412–14; *De contemptu mundi* LB V 1260B / ASD V-1 80:96–103 / *CWE* 66 170; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 844C–D, 857B–D, 912B–D, 1026A–C; *In Origenis libros censurae* LB VIII 437D–438A.
- 26 Bound by restrictions, rites, legalism. See 'The Godly Feast' n157 and 'A Fish Diet.'
- 27 *fiduciam*. Faith (*fides*) sometimes means 'trust' (*fiducia*); see Allen Ep 2675:15. Lines 4–7 ('In dress . . . little store by them') and 15–16 ('The shaven head . . . to God') were condemned by the Paris theologians. For Erasmus' defence of these passages see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 941F–942C. The Carthusian, he says there, is completely correct in distinguishing external observances from true, inward piety. For other treatments of this theme see 'The Godly Feast' and 'A Fish Diet.'
- 28 of itself] Not in the original edition (August 1523)
- 29 See n9 above.
- 30 *vili salario*; 'even for an eggshell,' as Hamlet says (4.4.52). With the Carthusian's comments here compare Fabulla's in 'The New Mother' 594:8–12.
- 31 See 'Military Affairs' and *Adagia* II vi 23 on slaughter by hired soldiers. The more savage the butcher, the better his chances of promotion: 'The soldier who has behaved most brutally is regarded as worthy of a command in the next war' (*Adagia* IV i 1 LB II 962E).
- 32 In a just war. On this question see the introduction to 'Military Affairs' 54 and the references given there.

- 33 *aris et foci* 'altars and hearths,' where the Lares and Penates, a family's ancestral spirits and protectors of the household, were honoured
- 34 *Adagia* I viii 8, from Plautus *Miles gloriosus* 326; cf *Rudens* 1324 and *Adagia* V 1 17.
- 35 See 'Military Affairs' 58:10–11, 'Charon' 824:28–32, 'The Knight without a Horse' 887:38–888:2. In the third of these it is said that 'the soldierly creed is that nothing survives a man but his corpse.'
- 36 Such was the custom in ancient monasteries also, Erasmus says in *De contemptu mundi* (LB V 1261E / ASD V-1 82:167–84:188 / CWE 66 173). See 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' n57.
- 37 Named as standard punishments in armies by Fourquevaux (*Instructions sur le fait de la guerre* 101 verso; the entire chapter is relevant). On Fourquevaux, see 'Military Affairs' n19. With these lines on military discipline compare *Adagia* IV i 1: *Dulce bellum inexpertis* (1515) LB II 959A–B; translation in Phillips 'Adages' 326. See also J.R. Hale *War and Society in Renaissance Europe 1450–1620* (London 1985; repr Baltimore 1986) 150–1.
- 38 *plecti capite*, in Roman law a technical term for execution
- 39 A friend writing from Nürnberg in July 1536 (not knowing Erasmus had died a few days earlier) regrets that because of so many bands of soldiers in the countryside he does not dare to journey to Basel, for if he tried to come he would surely be robbed – soldiers are always hard up (Allen Ep 3132:19–26). The soldiers in 'Military Affairs' and 'Cyclops' are examples. Such men were notoriously prompt to become rogues and brigands when not at war, as Erasmus frequently complains.
- 40 Mark 10:7; Matt 19:5; Eph 5:31
- 41 Cf Fabulla's comment cited in n30 above. Smith calls attention to two notorious mercenaries who were resident in Basel when Erasmus lived there and might have been known to him (*Key* 18). One of these, killed in the battle of Pavia (1525), left fourteen children: a striking instance of the risks of mercenary soldiering condemned here and in other colloquies.
- 42 The invariable consequences of military adventures, according to Erasmus in all his writings on war
- 43 See 'Military Affairs' 56:41: 'To be mad with the many is something!' Alessandro Benedetti in his *Diaria de bello Carolino* (1496) described the German mercenaries as 'a wild race, a law unto themselves' (ed and trans Dorothy Schullian [New York 1967] 188).
- 44 *balista chalybea*, an arbalest
- 45 *gemmarum* 'rubies,' pimples – marks of syphilis. The Carthusian calls it the Spanish pox, though it was known also as the Italian, Neapolitan, and French pox: Spanish because of conjecture that it had been brought to Spain from America in 1493; Italian, Neapolitan, or French because French soldiers in the invasion of Italy (1494–5) and seizure of Florence and Naples took the disease to the peninsula or because, after acquiring it there, they brought it home. Sebastian Brant says that the Swiss mercenaries called it French because they first experienced it in France (*Chronicle* 1531; see Strauss *Manifestations of Discontent* 215). The only certainty as to its origin was that it was the fault of another nation than one's own. Pox is mentioned sometimes as 'a kind of leprosy.' Its repulsive physical and social effects provide the theme of 'A Marriage in Name Only.' Other allusions occur in 'Inns' 372:21–32, 'The Young Man and the Harlot' 384:11–14, 'The

Knight without a Horse,' 884:24, 'The Epicurean' 1080:23–6, 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1105:25; and see Allen Ep 1593:85–101.

46 *delumbatus fuste*, alluding to the Roman military punishment of breaking a man's limbs by beating him

47 Cf 'Military Affairs' 55:6 and n3.

48 The Place Maubert is shown on a map of late medieval Paris in Thorndike *University Records* facing 448. Thomas Coryat (Coryate) in his *Crudities* (1611) complains of Paris – whose name, Lutetia, he derives from *lutum* 'mud' or 'dirt' – that 'many of the streets are the dirtiest, and so consequently the most stinking, of all that ever I saw in any city in my life' (1 171). On conditions in Paris and elsewhere see also 'A Fish Diet' nn10, 11, 293.

49 See n35 above.

THE LIAR AND THE MAN OF HONOUR

Pseudochei et Philetymi

First printed in the August 1523 edition.

Some of the unprincipled tactics described here by a smug double-dealer were common knowledge, as they are today; for additional examples see 'The Cheating Horse-Dealer' and 'Things and Names.' Others Erasmus learned by annoying personal experiences. Remarks in letters prove that Pseudocheus is intended for Franz Birckmann, a bookseller and printer's agent in Antwerp whom Erasmus had reason to distrust and about whose underhand methods of doing business he often complained; see Allen Epp 258:14 and n, 265:3-4, 283:154-64, 1388:24-5 and n, 1507, 1781:8-10 / CWE Epp 258:14n, 265:4-6, 283:184-96, 1388:27-8 and n23, 1507. Vives in November 1524 recognized that Pseudocheus in this colloquy was Birckmann (Allen Ep 1513:37-41 / CWE Ep 1513:46-50). In March 1525 Erasmus says flatly that this is so, adding that while 'perhaps' the dialogue is not directed against him, his behaviour certainly entitled him to this dubious distinction (Allen Ep 1560:12-16 / CWE Ep 1560:16-19). Birckmann seems to have been exasperatingly successful in causing trouble for out-of-town customers. On his history see further CEBR.

The dialogue, Lucianic in manner, recalls *Philopseudes*, a satire of mendacity and credulity and one of the dialogues by Lucian translated into Latin by Thomas More and published with translations by Erasmus in 1506. On Erasmus and Lucian see the introduction to these volumes xxviii and n28.

PSEUDOCHEUS, PHILETYMUS¹

Philetymus What's the source of your constant flow of lies?

Pseudocheus What's the source of spiders' webs?

5 **Philetymus** Then it's not a work of art but of nature?

Pseudocheus Nature gave the seed. Art and practice developed the skill.

Philetymus Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

Pseudocheus No more than the cuckoo of her song.

Philetymus But *you* can change your tune, and man was endowed with
10 speech in order to proclaim truth.²

Pseudocheus Oh, yes – when it's profitable. But it's not always convenient to tell the truth.³

Philetymus So it helps sometimes to have sticky fingers. And that this failing is closely related to yours is attested also by a popular proverb.⁴

Pseudocheus Each failing rests on good authority: one on Ulysses,⁵ so highly praised by Homer,⁶ and the other on Mercury,⁷ even though a god, if we trust the poets.

Philetymus Then why are liars commonly cursed, thieves even crucified?

Pseudocheus Not because they lie or thief but because they bungle the job, either acting contrary to their own nature, or lacking sufficient experience in the art.

Philetymus Is there any writer who treats of the art of lying?⁸

Pseudocheus Your rhetoricians⁹ have explained a great deal of it.

Philetymus Their subject is eloquence.

Pseudocheus True, but clever lying is a large part of eloquence.

Philetymus What's clever lying?

Pseudocheus You want a definition?

Philetymus Yes.

Pseudocheus Lying in such a way that you gain by it but can't be found out.

Philetymus But many are found out every day.

Pseudocheus They're not experts.

Philetymus You *are* an expert, therefore.

Pseudocheus Almost.

Philetymus See whether you could fool me by lying.¹⁰

Pseudocheus I could fool you too, best of men, if I liked.

Philetymus Tell me some lie, then.

Pseudocheus But I've just told one. Didn't you spot it?

Philetymus No.

Pseudocheus Well, look out. I'm about to start lying now.

Philetymus I'm ready; tell one.

Pseudocheus But I've just lied again without your discovering it.

Philetymus Really, I don't hear any lie.

Pseudocheus You would have heard one, if you understood the art.

Philetymus Explain it, then.

Pseudocheus First of all, I called you 'best of men.' Isn't that an egregious lie, since you're not even good? And if you *were* good, you couldn't be called best, as there are countless men better than you.

Philetymus You fooled me there, clearly.

Pseudocheus Now try to spot the other lie by yourself.

Philetymus I can't do it.

Pseudocheus In this matter, I see, you haven't the talent you display in other fields.

Philetymus Granted. Show me.

Pseudocheus When I said 'I'm about to start lying now,' wasn't I telling a whopper, inasmuch as I've been a habitual liar so many years and was lying the moment before I said this?

5 **Philetymus** A very clever trick.

Pseudocheus But now that you've been warned, at least, prick up your ears¹¹ to catch me lying.

Philetymus I've pricked 'em up; say on.

Pseudocheus It's already been said and you've copied my lie.

10 **Philetymus** You'll convince me that I've neither eyes nor ears!

Pseudocheus Since men's ears are fixed and can't be raised or lowered, I was lying about your pricking them up.

Philetymus The whole of human life is filled with such lies.

Pseudocheus Not with this kind alone, my good friend, for these are jokes.

15 There are some that make money for you.

Philetymus Profit from a lie is baser than that got from urine.¹²

Pseudocheus True enough – but for those who don't understand the art of lying.

Philetymus What art, then, do you possess?

20 **Pseudocheus** No fair teaching you for nothing. Shell out and you'll hear.

Philetymus I don't buy evil arts.

Pseudocheus Do *you* give your property away for nothing, then?

Philetymus I'm not so crazy as that.

Pseudocheus But I've a more assured income from this art of mine than
25 you have from your property.

Philetymus The art will remain yours. Just bring out a sample, to convince me you know what you're talking about.

Pseudocheus All right, here's a sample. I'm involved in many affairs with many persons: I buy, sell, keep back, pay out, borrow, receive deposits.¹³

30 **Philetymus** What of it?

Pseudocheus And it's here, mainly, that I snare those by whom I'm not easily caught.

Philetymus Who are they?

Pseudocheus The stupid, forgetful, unthinking, distant, and dead.

35 **Philetymus** The dead can't talk back, that's certain.

Pseudocheus If I sell a man something on credit, I enter it carefully in my account books.

Philetymus Then what?

Pseudocheus When payment is due I charge the buyer for more goods than
40 he received. If he's careless or has a bad memory, I'm sure of a profit.

Philetymus What if he catches you?

Pseudocheus I bring out the account book.

Philetymus What if he proves he didn't receive what you charge him for?

Pseudocheus I contradict him as much as I can, for in this profession bashfulness is no use at all. As a last resort,¹⁴ I invent some story.

5 **Philetymus** What if you're caught in the act?

Pseudocheus Nothing simpler;¹⁵ a servant made a mistake, or my memory slipped. The clever thing to do is to confuse accounts; this makes cheating easier. For instance, some accounts are paid and settled, others unpaid. I mix them together in later bills, so that nothing is marked 'paid.' When the reckoning is made, we have an argument, and usually I win; or else I perjure myself. Another common trick of the trade is to make up the bill when a man's about to go on a journey and is off guard. I'm always on the lookout. When something is deposited with me, I keep it secretly and don't restore it. Only after a long time does the man discover who the thing was sent to. 10 If at long last I can't deny it, I say the article was lost; or I insist I sent what I haven't sent; or I put the blame on the carriers. Finally, if I can't avoid making restitution, I pay back only part.

Philetymus A fine art, truly!

Pseudocheus Sometimes I collect the same debt twice if I can, first at home 20 and then wherever I am when travelling – and I'm always somewhere. Meanwhile time makes people forgetful, bills are confused, someone dies or goes abroad; if worst comes to worst, at least I've had the use of other people's money for a season. Some I take in by a pretence of generosity, to render them well disposed towards my lying. But always at somebody else's 25 expense: I wouldn't give a farthing¹⁶ of *my* money to my own mother. Now although the profit on each transaction may seem small, the large number of them (for I'm involved in many, as I told you) produces a pile that's nothing to be ashamed of. To avoid getting caught, the best of many tricks is this: I intercept as many letters as possible, open them, and read them.¹⁷ If I suspect 30 anything in them will work against me, I conceal them; or if I do return them, I take my time about it. In addition, I sow dissension, with my lies, between men who are far apart.

Philetymus What's the use of that?

Pseudocheus A double use. First, if a promise I've made in another's name, 35 and in whose name I've accepted a commission, is not carried out – for I sell airy promises¹⁸ of this kind at a high price – I pretend this or that man was to blame for things going wrong.

Philetymus What if he denies it?

Pseudocheus He's far away,¹⁹ say in Basel; I do the promising in England. 40 Next, it happens that once the quarrel's been started, neither man believes the other if any blame is laid on me. – That's an example of the art for you.

Philetymus But we simple souls, who call a fig a fig and a spade a spade,²⁰ are accustomed to call this art theft.

Pseudocheus How little the fellow understands imperial law! Are you allowed to bring an action for theft against one who keeps for himself what's deposited with him, or repudiates a debt, or has cheated by some such device?

Philetymus You ought to be allowed to.

Pseudocheus Just mark the skill of professionals. By these methods there's the greater profit, or certainly just as much; and there's less risk.

10 **Philetymus** Bad luck to you with your tricks and lies! I don't care to bid you farewell.

Pseudocheus Snarl away in your filthy rags of righteousness. Meanwhile I'll live enjoyably with my thefts and lies under the patronage of Ulysses and Mercury.²¹

NOTES

- 1 The name Pseudocheus ('liar') may be an adaptation of Lucian's Philopseudes ('lover of lies') in the dialogue with that title. Philetymus means 'friend or lover of honour.'
- 2 In *Lingua* (1525) LB IV 657-754 / ASD IV-1A / CWE 29 249-412, an essay on the uses and abuses of language, Erasmus deplores the prevalence of 'an unbridled tongue,' a malady raging through Christendom like the pox (Allen Ep 1593:85-117 CWE Ep 1593:93-125). Reflections on the power of speech for good and evil lead to consideration of the present state of religion and the church, troubled by schism and worldliness. This essay was the only work of importance published by Erasmus in 1525.
- 3 On Erasmus' aversion to liars see 'Things and Names' 812:17-813:5; 'Sympathy' 1045:33-1046:7 and n108.
- 4 A common English form was 'show me a liar and I'll show you a thief' (Tilley 377 L220).
- 5 He had the defects of his virtues, for besides being intrepid, versatile, and resourceful he was wily, crafty, and on occasion deceitful. *Adagia* II viii 79; cf *De copia* CWE 24 389:8, 584:32.
- 6 'Father of all tall tales,' as a character in 'Benefices' asserts (45:21). Erasmus remembers Lucian's *Philopseudes* 2 and *Vera historia* 1.3. Aristotle is more pertinent: 'Homer taught the other poets to tell lies in the proper way' (*Poetics* 24 1460a19-20). This remark is part of a serious analysis of what happens in poetry, not a mere pleasantry. In the context of Aristotle's *Poetics*, 'lies' are representations or fictions imagined and related for appropriate artistic purposes, not as 'falsehoods' of the kind condemned when 'lie' is a term of moral opprobrium. Plato had taken a more rigorous view. For his state he required censorship of literature that spoke unworthily of gods or described them as committing evil deeds, or that contained noxious passages about

heroes and other good men (*Republic* 3.386A–398B). Regretfully but consistently he felt compelled to banish the dramatic poets, for they do indeed tell many lies when the characters and actions they present say or do ('imitate') dishonourable and wicked things. Young people risk moral injury by hearing such stories or witnessing the spectacles at a theatre, since art has powerful effect upon the moral character. See further *Republic* 10.595A–608B.

Conceptions of poetry and its effects in the *Republic* and *Poetics* are fundamental in the history of aesthetics and the study of the quarrel between poetry and philosophy, a quarrel still alive in the age of Erasmus and long afterwards. The answer of those who wanted to save Homer from reproaches by philosophers or by Christian moralists was to interpret his poetry allegorically. Erasmus remarks that everything in Homer and Virgil may be read allegorically (*Enchiridion* LB 7F / CWE 66 33, and see *De copia* CWE 24 611:4–613:3). Like Plutarch, he wants teachers and pupils not only to read literary texts with close attention to features of language and form but to perceive and profit by whatever ethical lessons, explicit or latent, the texts provide. See Plutarch *Moralia* 17D–37B *Quomodo adolescens poetas audire debeat*; *De ratione studii* CWE 24 682:11–691:7; *Antibarbari* CWE 23 55:31–61:35. Consult F.M. Cornford's translation of the *Republic* (New York 1945) 321–40; E.E. Sikes *The Greek View of Poetry* (London 1931); E.R. Curtius *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* trans Willard R. Trask (New York 1953) 203–8; Margolin 'Erasme et la vérité' in *Recherches érasmienne* 45–69.

- 7 Messenger and herald of the gods and patron of eloquence, traders, travellers, merchants, and thieves (*Adagia* II i 85).
- 8 Lucian, for one; see introduction 344 above. In *Moriae encomium* Folly salutes those who tell of wonders and prodigies as her allies (LB IV 442F–443A / ASD IV-3 120:953–122:960 / CWE 27 113).
- 9 Liars of a different kind, but equally reprehensible – the sophists, teachers and practitioners of the art of persuasion by means of eloquence and argument. Plato condemns them as glib in clever lying and more concerned with declamation and with victory in debate than with knowledge and truth; for his views on sophists in general, see *Protagoras*.
Pseudocheus is pleased with his rhetorical jugglery. Philetymus thinks, correctly, that form and substance in discourse are inseparable and that both must be sound. Unsound logic, meretricious style, and bad morals in the speaker or writer corrupt rhetoric and turn eloquence into pretentious and specious display. This was the Platonic and later the Ciceronian judgment. The orator as defined by Cato the Censor must be of excellent character as well as skilled in speaking (Quintilian 1 preface 9 and 12.1.1–45). Erasmus' precepts followed these principles. See Curtius (n6 above) 62–78 and Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* passim. On nature, art, and experience (all referred to in the preceding lines) in rhetoric see *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1.2.3 trans Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library (London and Cambridge, Mass 1954) 7 note c.
- 10 With the exhibition that follows of clever lying, another Lucianic touch, compare the tricks in a later colloquy, 'The Imposture.'
- 11 *Adagia* III ii 56

- 12 Which the Roman emperor Vespasian (70–9 AD) is said to have taxed (Suetonius *Vespasian* 23.3; *Adagia* I ix 12, III ii 89, III vii 1 LB II 873E; *Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 588E / ASD IV-1 181:485 / CWE 27 252).
- 13 Erasmus had long experience in dealing with bankers and business agents. Seventy letters about his financial affairs, written to and from Erasmus Schets of Antwerp, his principal agent from 1525 to 1536, survive (see CEBR and the index in Allen XII). On Erasmus' income, which was mainly from pensions and gifts, see J. Hoyoux 'Les moyens d'existence d'Erasme' BHR 5 (1944) 7–59; on his estate, Allen XI 362–3 Appendix 25.
- 14 *extrema ancora*, usually *sacra ancora*; *Adagia* I i 24
- 15 Because Pseudocheus has dealings in different places and because, as he says (348:3–6 below), the laws then gave little protection to borrowers or lenders. In *Adagia* I ix 12 Erasmus denounces moneylenders, extortioners, and the power of money in the church (LB II 337B–339A).
- 16 *teruncium*, a Roman coin of very small value; *Adagia* I viii 9
- 17 'All letters are intercepted nowadays,' says a speaker in 'A Pilgrimage' (628:24–5).
- 18 *fumos*. *Adagia* I iii 41 quotes Martial 4.5.7, Jerome, and many other sources. See also *Adagia* IV viii 83.
- 19 Erasmus often had trouble with delays in payment to him of an English pension. The agent through whom payment was made was a Genoese merchant, Raffaello Maruffo, resident in England. He was not dishonest, but the delays and misunderstandings were a vexation to Erasmus – as perhaps to More, who lent assistance in England. See Ep 387, Allen Epp 388:62–85, 412:33–46, 424:18–66 / CWE Epp 388:66–92, 412:36–51, 424:20–74.
- 20 *Adagia* I iii 88, II iii 5
- 21 345:3–5 above

THE SHIPWRECK

Nauffragium

First printed in the August 1523 edition. Some early editions, though not the first, add *Navάγιου* as a running title. One of the more popular colloquies, this dialogue is the product of creative imagination, but it has themes so ancient and so familiar that literary precedents also were surely in the author's mind when he wrote it. Parts of it, for example, recall the famous shipwrecks in Jonah 1 and Acts 27–28; other incidents were the common property of folklore, fables, *exempla*, and hagiography. Whatever the sources, Erasmus adapted them to suit his own purposes.

Use of such material does not, of course, rule out the possibility that the narrative was based upon reports of an actual shipwreck. Preserved Smith was confident that it was and that the very ship, and the man who was Erasmus' informant, could be named (*Key* 18–20). Identification depends on the assumption that Antony is Antoon (III) van Bergen, to whom two letters from Erasmus survive (Epp 760 and 969), and that the other speaker is Adolph of Burgundy, lord of Veere and Beveren and admiral of Flanders, whom Erasmus had long known. See Allen Ep 93 introduction. Erasmus' *Oratio de virtute amplectenda*, published in 1503, is dedicated to Adolph of Veere (LB v 65D–71D / CWE 29 1–13; on its various titles, see CWE 29 2). In January 1516 a Scotch merchant ship was wrecked off the coast of Friesland, but the crew were saved. The ship was seized by an imperial prefect, next captured by the duke of Gelderland, then recovered from him by the prefect and taken to the port of Veere. Moreover the ship in Erasmus' dialogue has an Italian envoy aboard. The Scotch government, at the time of the shipwreck just mentioned, was having a diplomatic correspondence with the Holy See. When taken together, all this evidence proves, it is suggested, that Erasmus is telling a true story he must have heard from Adolph. 'Proves' seems too strong a word, but there is no difficulty in supposing that some shipwreck he knew about provided Erasmus with material for the colloquy, and Smith's evidence is therefore welcome.

The question of sources, while assuredly of interest, does not affect the merits of 'The Shipwreck' as a piece of dramatic dialogue or its reputation as a work remembered and imitated by other writers. The long scenes in Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* 4.18–24 (enlarged for the 1552 edition) were evidently inspired by this colloquy (R. Lebégue 'Rabelais, the Last of the French Erasmians' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12 [1949] 97–9). Thomas Heywood turned the colloquy into English verse, as

he had done with *Proci et puellae*, in *Pleasant Dialogues and Dramma's* (1637). Some lines in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* may have derived from it; see n8 below. Defoe too may have owed something to it. That it is the source of chapter 57 of Reade's *The Cloister and the Hearth* is beyond doubt. A reader who turns from 'The Shipwreck' to Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* 5.1–2 will notice similarities, but there seems to be no evidence of Ibsen's acquaintance with Erasmus.

'The Shipwreck' is one of the best of the colloquies satirizing superstition in contemporary religious practices – 'Rash Vows,' 'A Fish Diet,' 'The Funeral,' 'Cyclops,' 'The Seraphic Funeral' and 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake' – and belongs with the best satirical writing of the sixteenth century. Naturally it pleased most those readers who shared Erasmus' scorn of pretended piety and enjoyed his irony. His clerical opponents found it irreverent as well as ironic, as the notes to certain passages will show.

ANTONY, ADOLPH¹

Antony Terrible tales you tell! That's what going to sea is like?

Adolph Oh, no, what I've related up to this point is mere sport compared
5 with what you'll hear now.

Antony I've heard more than enough of disasters. When you're recalling them I shudder as if I myself were sharing the danger.

Adolph To me, on the contrary, troubles over and done with are enjoyable.²
– On that same night something happened which in large part robbed the
10 skipper of his hope of safety.

Antony What, I beseech you?

Adolph The night was partially clear, and on the topmast, in the
'crow's-nest'³ (as I think they call it), stood one of the crew, looking out for
land. Suddenly a fiery ball appeared beside him⁴ – a very bad sign to sailors
15 when it's a single flame, lucky when it's double. Antiquity believed these
were Castor and Pollux.⁵

Antony What's their connection with sailors? One was a horseman, the
other a boxer.⁶

Adolph This is the poets' version. The skipper, who was by the helm,
20 spoke up: 'Mate' – that's what sailors call one another – 'see your company
alongside there?' 'I see it,' the man replied, 'and I hope it's good luck!'⁷ Soon
the fiery ball slid down the ropes and rolled straight up to the skipper.

Antony Wasn't he scared out of his wits?

Adolph Sailors get used to marvels.⁸ After stopping there a moment, it
25 rolled the whole way round the ship, then dropped through the middle

hatches and disappeared. Towards noon the storm began to rage more and more. – Ever seen the Alps?

Antony Yes, I've seen them.

Adolph Those mountains are warts compared with the waves of the sea.

5 Whenever we were borne on the crest, we could have touched the moon with a finger; whenever we dipped, we seemed to plunge through the gaping earth straight down to hell.⁹

Antony What fools they are who trust themselves to the sea!

Adolph Since the crew's struggle with the storm was hopeless, the skipper,
10 pale as a ghost, at last came up to us.

Antony His pallor portends some great disaster.¹⁰

Adolph 'Friends,' he says, 'I'm no longer master of my ship; the winds have won. The only thing left to do is to put our hope in God and each one prepare himself for the end.'

15 **Antony** Truly a Scythian speech!¹¹

Adolph 'But first of all,' he says, 'the ship must be unloaded; deadly necessity¹² compels it. Better to save life at the cost of goods than for both to perish together.' The plain fact convinced them. A lot of luggage filled with costly wares was tossed overboard.¹³

20 **Antony** That was a real waste!¹⁴

Adolph On board was a certain Italian who had served as legate to the king of Scotland. He had a chest full of silver plate, rings, cloth, and silk robes.

Antony He didn't want to come to terms with the sea?

Adolph No, instead he wanted to go down with his beloved treasures or
25 else be saved along with them. So he protested.¹⁵

Antony What did the skipper do?

Adolph 'We're quite willing to let you perish alone with your goods,' said he, 'but it's not fair for all of us to be endangered because of your chest. Rather, we'll throw you and the chest together into the sea.'

30 **Antony** True sailor's talk!

Adolph So the Italian, too, threw his goods overboard, cursing away by heaven and hell because he had entrusted his life to so barbarous an element.

Antony I recognize the Italian accent.¹⁶

Adolph Soon afterwards the winds, unappeased by our offerings, broke the
35 ropes and tore the sails to pieces.

Antony Catastrophe!

Adolph At that moment the skipper comes to us again.

Antony To make a speech?

Adolph 'Friends' – he begins by way of greeting – 'the hour warns each of
40 us to commend himself to God and prepare for death.' Questioned by some familiar with seamanship as to how many hours he thought he could keep



St Christopher and the child Jesus
Albrecht Dürer, 1521
Albertina, Vienna

the ship afloat, he answered that he couldn't promise anything, but not more than three hours.

Antony This speech was even sterner than the first one.

Adolph After saying this, he orders all the shrouds to be slashed and the
5 mast sawn off down to its socket and thrown into the sea, together with the spars.

Antony Why this?

Adolph With the sail ruined or torn, the mast was a useless burden. Our whole hope was in the tiller.

10 **Antony** What about the passengers meanwhile?

Adolph There you'd have seen what a wretched plight we were in – the sailors singing *Salve regina*,¹⁷ praying to the Virgin Mother, calling her Star of the Sea, Queen of Heaven, Mistress of the World, Port of Salvation, flattering her with many other titles the Sacred Scriptures nowhere assign to her.

15 **Antony** What has she to do with the sea? She never went voyaging, I believe.

Adolph Formerly Venus was protectress of sailors, because she was believed to have been born of the sea.¹⁸ Since she gave up guarding them, the Virgin Mother has succeeded this mother who was not a virgin.¹⁹

Antony You're joking.

20 **Adolph** Prostrating themselves on the deck, some worshipped the sea, pouring whatever oil they had on the waves,²⁰ flattering it no differently from the way we do a wrathful sovereign.

Antony What did they say?

Adolph 'O most merciful sea, O most kind sea, O most splendid sea, O most
25 lovely sea, have pity on us! Save us!' Many songs of this kind they sang to the sea – which was deaf.²¹

Antony Absurd superstition! What did the rest do?

Adolph Some did nothing but get sick. Many made vows. There was an Englishman who promised heaps of gold to the Virgin of Walsingham if he
30 reached shore alive.²² Some promised many things to the wood of the cross at such and such a place;²³ others, again, to that in some other place. The same with respect to the Virgin Mary, who reigns in many places – and they think the vow worthless unless you specify the place.

Antony Ridiculous! As if saints don't dwell in heaven.

35 **Adolph** Some pledged themselves to become Carthusians.²⁴ There was one who promised to journey to St James at Compostella²⁵ barefoot, bareheaded, clad only in a coat of mail, begging his bread besides.

Antony Did nobody remember Christopher?²⁶

40 **Adolph** I couldn't help laughing as I listened to one chap, who in a loud voice (for fear he wouldn't be heard) promised a wax taper as big as himself²⁷ to the Christopher in the tallest church in Paris²⁸ – a mountain rather than a

statue.²⁹ While he was proclaiming this at the top of his lungs, insisting on it again and again, an acquaintance who chanced to be standing by nudged him with his elbow and cautioned: 'Be careful what you promise. Even if you sold all your goods at auction, you couldn't pay for it.' Then the other,
 5 lowering his voice – so Christopher wouldn't overhear him, of course³⁰ – said, 'Shut up, you fool. Do you suppose I'm serious? If I once touch land, I won't give him a tallow candle.'³¹

Antony Blockhead! Batavian, I suppose.³²

Adolph No, a Zeelander.³³

10 **Antony** I'm surprised nobody thought of the apostle Paul, who was once on a voyage and when the ship broke leaped overboard and reached land.³⁴ No stranger to misfortune, he knew how to help those in distress.³⁵

Adolph Paul wasn't mentioned.

Antony Did they pray all the while?

15 **Adolph** Strenuously. One chanted *Salve regina*, another *Credo in Deum*.³⁶ Some had certain private little prayers,³⁷ like charms, to ward off danger.

Antony How devout men are made by suffering! In prosperity the thought of God or saint never enters their heads. What were you doing all this time? Making vows to any of the saints?

20 **Adolph** Not at all.

Antony Why?

Adolph Because I don't make deals with saints.³⁸ For what else is that but a bargain according to the form 'I'll give this if you do that' or 'I'll do this if you'll do that'; 'I'll give a taper if I can swim to safety'; 'I'll go to Rome if
 25 you rescue me.'

Antony But you called on some saint for help?

Adolph Not even that.

Antony But why?

Adolph Because heaven's a large place. If I entrust my safety to some saint
 30 – St Peter, for example, who perhaps will be first to hear, since he stands at the gate³⁹ – I may be dead before he meets God and pleads my cause.⁴⁰

Antony What did you do, then?

Adolph Went straight to the Father himself,⁴¹ reciting the Paternoster. No saint hears sooner than he or more willingly grants what is asked.

35 **Antony** But didn't your conscience accuse you when you did this? Weren't you afraid to entreat the Father, whom you had offended by so many sins?

Adolph To speak frankly, my conscience did deter me somewhat. But I soon recovered my spirits, thinking to myself, 'No father is so angry with his son that, if he sees him in danger in a stream or lake, he won't grasp him by the
 40 hair and pull him to shore.' Of all the passengers, none behaved more calmly than a certain woman who was suckling a baby.

Antony What did she do?

Adolph She was the only one who didn't scream, weep, or make promises; she simply prayed in silence, clasping her little boy. – While the ship was continually battered by the sea, the skipper girded it with ropes from stem to stern,⁴² for fear it might break to pieces.

Antony Miserable protection!

Adolph Meantime an old priest, a man of sixty named Adam, jumped up. Stripped to his underclothes, and with his shoes and leggings removed, he urged us all to prepare likewise for swimming. And standing so in the middle of the ship, he preached to us a sermon from Gerson⁴³ on the five truths concerning the benefit of confession,⁴⁴ exhorting everyone to be ready both for life and for death. A Dominican was there, too. Those who wished confessed to these two.

Antony What did you do?

Adolph Seeing everything in an uproar, I confessed silently to God, condemning my unrighteousness before him and imploring his mercy.

Antony Where would you have gone had you died in that condition?

Adolph That I left to God the Judge, for I was unwilling to be judge of my own cause; nevertheless a strong hope possessed my mind the whole time.

– While all this is going on, the captain returns to us in tears. 'Get ready,' says he, 'because the ship will be useless to us in a quarter of an hour.' It was already shattered in some places and drawing water. Soon afterwards a sailor reports seeing a church tower in the distance and beseeches us to appeal to whichever saint took that church under his protection. Everyone falls to his knees and prays to the unknown saint.

Antony If you had invoked him by name, he might have heard.

Adolph We didn't know his name.⁴⁵ As much as he could, meanwhile, the skipper steered the ship in that direction. By now it was breaking up, taking in water everywhere, and clearly about to fall to pieces had it not been undergirded with ropes.

Antony A bad state of affairs!

Adolph We were carried far enough in for the inhabitants of the place to see our plight. Groups of them rushed to the shore, and taking off hats and coats and sticking them on poles urged us towards themselves and by lifting their arms to heaven indicated their pity for our lot.

Antony I'm waiting to hear what happened.

Adolph The whole ship was filled with water now, so that thereafter we would be no safer in ship than in sea.

Antony At that moment you had to fall back on your last hope, your sacred anchor.⁴⁶

Adolph A miserable one. The crew bailed out the lifeboat and lowered it

into the sea. Everyone tried to hurl himself into it, the sailors protesting in the uproar that the lifeboat would not hold such a crowd but that everybody should grab what he could and swim. The situation did not allow leisurely plans. One person snatches an oar, another a boat-hook,⁴⁷ another a tub, another a bucket, another a plank, and, each relying on his own resources, they commit themselves to the waves.⁴⁸

Antony What happened during this time to that poor woman, the only one who did not weep and wail?

Adolph She was the first of them all to reach shore.

10 **Antony** How could she do that?

Adolph We had put her on a warped plank and tied her in such a way that she couldn't easily fall off. We gave her a small board to use as a paddle, wished her luck, and shoved her off into the waves, pushing with a pole to get her clear of the ship, where the danger lay. Holding her baby with her left hand, she paddled with the right.

15 **Antony** Brave woman!

Adolph Since nothing else remained, one man seized a wooden statue of the Virgin Mother, now rotten and mouse-eaten, and, putting his arms around it, began to swim.⁴⁹

20 **Antony** Did the lifeboat come through safely?

Adolph The first to go down. And thirty people had thrown themselves into it.

Antony What mishap caused that?

Adolph Before it could get away it was overturned by the lurching of the big ship.

25 **Antony** A cruel business! What then?

Adolph While looking out for others, I nearly perished myself.

Antony How so?

Adolph Because there was nothing left for me to swim on.

30 **Antony** Cork would have been useful there.

Adolph In that emergency I would rather have had plain cork tree than golden candlestick. Casting about, I finally thought of the stump of the mast. Since I couldn't pry it loose by myself, I enlisted the help of another man. Supporting ourselves on this, we put to sea, I holding the right end and he the left. While we were tossing about in this way, that priest who preached on board threw himself in our midst – on our shoulders. Big fellow, too. 'Who's the third?' we yell. 'He'll be the death of us all.' He, on the other hand, says calmly, 'Cheer up, there's plenty of room. God will help us.'

35 **Antony** Why was he so late in starting to swim?

40 **Adolph** Oh, he was to be in the lifeboat along with the Dominican (for everybody conceded this much honour to him), but although they had

confessed to each other on the ship, nevertheless some condition – I don't know what – had been forgotten.⁵⁰ There on the edge of the ship they confess anew, and each lays his hand on the other. While they're doing this, the lifeboat goes down. Adam told me this.

5 **Antony** What became of the Dominican?⁵¹

Adolph According to Adam, after entreating the aid of the saints he threw off his clothes and began to swim.

Antony Which saints did he invoke?

Adolph Dominic, Thomas, Vincent, and I don't know which Peter,⁵² but first
10 and foremost he placed his trust in Catherine of Siena.⁵³

Antony Christ didn't come to mind?

Adolph This is what the priest told me.

Antony He'd have swum better if he hadn't thrown off his sacred cowl. With that put aside, how could Catherine of Siena recognize him?⁵⁴ – But go
15 on with what happened to you.

Adolph While we were still tossing beside the ship, which was rolling from side to side at the will of the waves, the broken rudder smashed the thigh of the man who was holding on to the left end of the stump. So he was torn away. The priest, saying a prayer *Requiem aeternam*⁵⁵ for him, took
20 his place, urging me to keep hold of my end with confidence and kick my feet vigorously. We were swallowing a lot of salt water all this while. Thus Neptune saw to it that we had not only a salty bath but even a salty drink, though the priest showed us a remedy for that.⁵⁶

Antony What, please?

25 **Adolph** Every time a wave came rushing upon us, he turned the back of his head to it and kept his mouth closed.

Antony That's a doughty old fellow you describe.

Adolph When we'd made some progress after swimming a while, the priest, who was very tall, said, 'Cheer up, I'm touching bottom.' I didn't
30 dare hope for such great luck. 'We're too far from shore to hope for bottom.' 'Oh, no,' he replied, 'I feel land with my feet.' 'Maybe it's something from the chests that the sea has rolled this way.' 'No,' he said, 'I feel land plainly by the scraping of my toes.' After we had swum a while longer in this direction and he again touched bottom, 'Do what you think best,' he said,
35 'I'm giving up the whole mast to you and trusting myself to the bottom,' and thereupon, after waiting for the waves to subside, he went on foot as fast as he could. When the waves overtook him again, he resisted by clasp-
40 ing his knees with his hands and putting his head under water, as divers and ducks do; when the waves receded, up he popped and moved on. When I saw he was successful at this, I imitated him. Standing on the coast were men – hardy fellows and used to the water – who by means of long poles, held

out from one to the other, braced themselves against the force of the waves, so that the one farthest out held his pole to the swimmer. When this was grasped, all heaved towards shore and the swimmer was hauled safely to dry land. A number were rescued by this device.

5 **Antony** How many?

Adolph Seven, but two of these died of exhaustion when brought to a fire.⁵⁷

Antony How many were you in the ship?

Adolph Fifty-eight.

Antony O cruel sea! At least it might have been satisfied with a tenth, which
10 is enough for priests.⁵⁸ From so large a number how few returned!

Adolph We were treated with wonderful kindness by the people there,⁵⁹ who looked after our needs with astonishing eagerness: lodging, fire, food, clothing, money for travel.

Antony What people were they?

15 **Adolph** Hollanders.⁶⁰

Antony No people could be more kindly,⁶¹ though they do have savage neighbours. I guess you won't visit Neptune very soon again after this.⁶²

Adolph No, not unless God takes my reason from me.

Antony And I for my part would rather hear such tales than experience the
20 events at first hand.

NOTES

- 1 This name is used in 'Sport' 78–9 and in the March 1522 edition of 'The Godly Feast' (see n1).
- 2 'Sailors are fond of recalling dangers' (*Lingua* LB IV 73OF / ASD IV-1A 145:933 / CWE 29 378); cf 'A Feast of Many Courses' 805:19–21. 'Iucundi acti labores' was proverbial. The classical commonplaces, beginning with *Odyssey* 15.400–1, are quoted in *Adagia* II iii 43. To Latin examples cited there Augustine *Confessions* 8.3.7 may be added.
- 3 A permissible anachronism (the term is of nineteenth-century origin) for Adolph's word *galea*. Literally *galea* means 'helmet.' It is rendered 'scuttle,' in a sense now obsolete, by some of the earlier translators. The technical terms 'top' and 'top-castle' in fifteenth-century English come close to the meaning (see 'top' III 9 a and 'top-castle' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*).
- 4 A corposant, the electrical phenomenon seen sometimes on a mast or yard-arm during a storm; also called formerly 'St Elmo's fire' after St Elmo, whose real name was Peter Gonzalez (d 1246). He became a patron saint of sailors. Linguistically and in other respects the name Elmo seems to have been frequently confused with that of St Erasmus, a martyr in the persecutions of Christians under Diocletian early in the fourth century. Like St Elmo, St Erasmus was a patron and protector of Mediterranean seamen.
- 5 The Dioscuri, twin sons of Zeus and Leda. Ancient seamen are said to have regarded the electrical discharge called St Elmo's fire as a sign of the Dioscuri.

See Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.101; Horace *Odes* 1.12.25–32; Lucian *Navigium* 9; Erasmus *Parabolae* CWE 23 186:33–187:2. That single and double flames signify bad and good luck respectively comes from the passage in Pliny. In his note on Acts 28:11 Erasmus reminds us that the ship which carried Paul from Malta to Italy was called *Dioscuri* (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 540F–541E). His prayer ‘for those going to sea’ alludes to the Dioscuri (*Precationes* LB V 1204E). For mythological and literary traditions and folklore about Castor and Pollux consult J. Rendel Harris *Boanerges* (Cambridge 1913; an expansion of his *The Cult of the Heavenly Twins*) 202–6 and *passim*.

- 6 Castor was the horseman, Pollux (Polydeuces) the boxer; Homer *Iliad* 3.237.
- 7 Friar John in Rabelais’ *Gargantua and Pantagruel* 5.18 tries to comfort frightened passengers by telling them he has seen Castor on the main yard-arm but he does not report – for unlike Adolph he does not know – that a single flame is a bad omen. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, writing of a storm met on his voyage to Newfoundland in 1583, says ‘We had also upon our maine yard, an apparition of a little fire by night, which seamen doe call Castor and Pollux. But we had onely one, which they take an evill signe of more tempest: the same is usuall in stormes’ (Richard Hakluyt *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation* Everyman’s Library, 8 vols [London and New York 1926–31] VI 35).
- 8 On these lines as the probable source, directly or indirectly, of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* 1.2.195–206 see J.D. Rea ‘A Source for the Storm in *The Tempest*’ *Modern Philology* 17 (1919) 279–86. His conclusions are accepted by other scholars, for example Smith in *Key* 20–1; Kenneth Muir *Shakespeare’s Sources* (London 1957) 1 261. Comparable suggestions about 353:4 of the colloquy and *Hamlet* 5.1.306 (‘Make Ossa like a wart’) or 353:5–7 and *Othello* 2.1.189–92 (on the ship’s climbing ‘hills of seas / Olympus-high and duck again as low / As hell’s from heaven’) by J.A.K. Thomson *Shakespeare and the Classics* (London 1952) 118, 126 are plausible but not certain.
- 9 *Tartara*, perhaps a recollection of Ps 107:26 (106:26 Vulg) as well as Ovid *Tristia* 1.2.19–22
- 10 In a tempest at sea ‘omnes futura morte pallescunt’ (Augustine *Confessions* 8.3.7).
- 11 Harsh, severe; Scythian insensitivity was proverbial. See *Adagia* II iii 35, IV ix 85.
- 12 Cf *Adagia* II iii 41.
- 13 As in *Jonah* 1:5 and Acts 27:18–19
- 14 *iacturam facere* ‘jettison’ or ‘throw away’ in the sense of ‘waste’
- 15 ‘Even as a Merchaunt that is compelled by a greate tempest in the sea to cast his merchandice out of the Shippe, it is not to bee supposed that hee would cast away his ryches of hys owne free will, not compelled by the storme’ (John Fisher *English Works* ed J.E.B. Mayor, EETS extra series 27 [London 1876] 354). In one of More’s epigrams sailors appease the waves by tossing a rascally monk overboard (More *Latin Epigrams* 73, 194 no 157). Throwing a troublesome passenger overboard, as the skipper threatens to do with the Italian merchant, has many precedents besides *Jonah*. Cf Stith Thompson *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Bloomington, Ind and London 1955) s264.1.
- 16 Italians, particularly Romans, had a reputation for disparaging everything and everybody foreign as ‘barbarous’ or uncivilized. See *Moriae encomium*

LB IV 448B–D / ASD IV-3 128:64–8 and n / CWE 27 117; Denys Hay 'Italy and Barbarian Europe' in *Italian Renaissance Studies* ed E.F. Jacob (London 1960) 48–68. Erasmus' *Ciceronianus* plays upon some of these prejudices.

- 17 A widely used prayer, dating from the eleventh century, to the Virgin Mary, customarily sung at the end of the canonical day, a favourite with Italian seamen. On its history, see *A Dictionary of Hymnology* ed John Julian (New York 1892) 991–2 and the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. For a metrical version by Erasmus, see CWE 85–6 338, 694–6 no 118 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 319–20 no 100. On his voyage to the Holy Land in 1506, Richard Guildford relates, sailors and passengers 'fearfully sang *Salve regina*' during an 'outrageous storm' (*The Pilgrimage of Sir Richard Guylforde* ed Henry Ellis, Camden Society 51 [London 1851] 64–5). Cf 'A Fish Diet' 719:15–20.
 - 18 Venus was identified by the Romans with the Greek goddess Aphrodite, who was born of the sea (Hesiod *Theogony* 188–206). Cf 'Courtship' 261:33 above.
 - 19 Invocation of the Virgin instead of Venus is one of many examples cited by Erasmus of the replacement of pagan practices by ostensibly Christian ones in which a regrettable degree of superstition lingers (*Modus orandi Deum* LB V 1120D–E). These lines describing the sailors' prayers were censured by Erasmus' critics. In reply to the Spanish monks (1528) he denies that the passage reflects on the honour of the Virgin; on the contrary it attacks the superstitiousness of those who, when in peril, appeal to her rather than to God. In Scripture she is never called 'Queen of Heaven,' 'Mistress of the World,' or 'Star of the Sea' (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1086C–E). Yet Erasmus himself had adopted exuberant imagery in prayers addressed to the Virgin: 'unicum coeli decus, certissimum terrae praesidium' (*Paeon Virgini Matri* LB V 1227E), 'spes unica calamitatum nostrarum,' 'stella ... huius nostri pelagi et luna nostrae terrae' (*Obsecratio ad Virginem Mariam* LB V 1233E, 1235D). For the objections of the Parisian theologians (1526, printed 1531) and Erasmus' answer, see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 942C–F. In another response he insists that his irony is directed at the sailors, not Mary (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* [1531] LB IX 1164C, part of a long passage [1163E–1167A] defending various utterances on this subject). Juan de Valdés' *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* (1529), a work indebted to writings by Erasmus (especially 'Faith'), includes passages recalling this part of 'The Shipwreck' (facsimile ed with introduction and notes by M. Bataillon [Coimbra 1925] 109–10, 271). On the cult of the Virgin see further 'A Pilgrimage' 624:18–628:18, 628:26–641:18 and the notes, especially n31.
- Another legend, of which the scene described here seem almost a parody, is found in the medieval *Liber de miraculis sanctae Dei genitricis Mariae* ed Bernardus Pez (Vienna 1731), repr and ed T.F. Crane (Ithaca 1925). In a storm, sailors appeal to their favourite saints, ignoring Mary *regina coeli*. Whereupon they are rebuked by an abbot and advised to appeal to her. When they do so a great light, in the likeness of a candle, appears on the topmast and presently the seas are calm (chapter 28; ed Crane 34–5; cf *The 'Stella maris' of John of Garland* ed Evelyn Fay Wilson [Cambridge, Mass 1946] 107, 124–5, 166, 188–9). The difference between the legend and the scene in 'The Shipwreck' is instructive. Adolph goes 'straight to the Father' without seeking the intervention of the Virgin or addressing her by titles not found in Scripture. That such a deliberate rejection of custom seemed irreverent to Erasmus' opponents is not surprising.

On *Stella maris* as a title for Mary see Jaroslav Pelikan *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* III *The Growth of Medieval Theology* (600–1300) (Chicago 1978) 162.

- 20 *Adagia* I vii 35, from Pliny *Naturalia historia* 2.234
- 21 Proverbial; *Adagia* I iv 87
- 22 Erasmus' visit to the shrine of the Virgin at Walsingham is described in 'A Pilgrimage.' When the ship commanded by Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle, struck a rock and burst asunder during a naval action against the French in April 1513, he made a vow to go on pilgrimage to Walsingham if his life was saved (*The Lisle Letters* ed Muriel St Clare Byrne, 6 vols [Chicago 1981] I 158–9). He survived, but whether he kept his vow is not recorded.
- 23 Many places claimed to possess relics of the cross. If all the fragments were joined together, says a speaker in 'A Pilgrimage,' 'they'd seem a full load for a freighter' (632:18–20).
- 24 Not merely to join a monastic order but one of the strictest. Cf *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1312c; see 'The Soldier and the Carthusian.'
- 25 In north-western Spain; like Walsingham a favourite goal of pilgrims. See 'Rash Vows' n14 above and 'A Pilgrimage' 623:9–624:10.
- 26 Legendary Eastern saint, martyred in the third century. He was supposed to have borne the child Christ across a river: a heavy burden because Christ carried the weight of mankind's sins. As patron and protector of travellers, whether by land or water, Christopher became one of the most popular of 'auxiliary' saints (see 'Military Affairs' 58:12–20 and the notes). Erasmus often alludes to the cult of Christopher, as he does to those of Barbara and George. When criticizing superstitious credulity in 'A Fish Diet,' and particularly the custom of praying to saints instead of to Christ, he again uses *Salve regina* and these saints among others as illustrations (719:12–720:3). There was a popular belief that one who was within sight of an image or statue of Christopher would suffer no accident on that day (*Moriae encomium* LB IV 443B–C, and note Holbein's drawing there / ASD IV-3 122:961–4 / CWE 27 114; *Enchiridion* LB V 26E / Holborn 66:5–7 / CWE 66 63; cf Allen Ep 1347:69–72 / CWE Ep 1347:78–82). Commonly a large image of the saint was placed opposite the south door of churches where it could easily be seen. For Erasmus' replies to censure of passages on Christopher, including those in *Enchiridion* and 'The Shipwreck,' see *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1162B–1163D.
- 27 When one of the Paston family was ill his mother-in-law promised to give 'a nodyr ymmage of wax of the weytte of yow' to Our Lady of Walsingham for his recovery (*Paston Letters* 28 September 1443; ed James Gairdner, 6 vols [London 1904] II 55 no 47).
- 28 The cathedral of Notre-Dame
- 29 In 'A Pilgrimage' a sceptical pilgrim doubts that size has anything to do with producing miracles, giving as an example the Christopher in Paris, 'fully as big as a mountain – yet he was distinguished for no miracles that I ever heard of' (639:10–13). Sir Thomas Browne wrote that it 'stands Colossus like in the entrance of Nostre Dame in Paris' (*Pseudodoxia epidemica* [1646] 5.16). Cf de Beatis *Travel Journal* 116. The wooden statue is said to have been thirty feet high (Allan Temko *Notre-Dame of Paris* [New York 1963] 302). It was placed in the cathedral in 1413 and stood there until the late eighteenth century.
- 30 Cf 'The Young Man and the Harlot' 385:13–14.

- 31 Smith (*Key* 20) called attention to a very similar anecdote in the *Facetiae* (1470) of Poggio Bracciolini, who says he heard the story in England, which he visited in 1421–2: an Irish shipmaster during a storm vows to Mary a taper as big as the mast but confides to a companion ‘If we escape she’ll have to be content with a penny candle’ (*Opera omnia* [Basel 1538; 4 vols, repr Turin 1964–9] I 474). A comparable tale is told in Lucian’s *Zeus tragoedus* 15. Analogues of Poggio’s, with minor differences, are found in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In one a pilgrim to Mont-Saint Michel, imperilled by the sea, promises his cow to the saint. When the danger increases he promises his calf as well. But when the waters recede he says ‘I’ll give you neither cow nor calf’ (*The Exempla of Jacques de Vitry* ed T.F. Crane [London 1890] 47 no 102). In a fourteenth-century version the man who promises the candle is a Welshman. After he escapes he says Mary shall have a candle ‘just big enough to go to bed by’ (so A.G. Little *Studies in English Franciscan History* [Manchester 1917] 145, from an unprinted manuscript; he does not give the Latin text). The autocrat of the breakfast table, in Oliver Wendell Holmes’ book of that title, tells this story, ‘put into rough English’ from a 1650 Amsterdam edition of Erasmus, as proof that ‘men are cowards in the contemplation of futurity’ (chapter 4).
- 32 Ancient name for Hollander. Erasmus’ countrymen had a certain notoriety as stolid and obtuse people or ‘Boeotians’ (*Adagia* I x 6, II iii 7, III ii 48). Although for reasons of scholarly work, publishing, and opportunities for intercourse with valued friends, Erasmus spent most of his mature life elsewhere than in Holland and sometimes stressed his affinity with Germany (especially when living in Basel) or at other times with France, he remained a patriotic and perceptive Hollander who could both take and make jokes at his countrymen’s expense (as in *Moriae encomium* LB IV 415B / ASD IV-3 84:249–56 / CWE 27 93), yet defend them warmly from detractors (as at 360:14–17 below). See especially *Adagia* IV vi 35; with this compare III i 1 LB II 713F and IV vi 28 LB II 1082D–E. In his writings on peace and on social and political institutions he preached against the dangers of chauvinism and other irrational excesses – as he deemed them – of provincialism or nationalism. But he was proud to be Dutch. These topics are treated *inter alia* by Johan Huizinga ‘Erasmus über Vaterland und Nationen’ in *Gedenkschrift* 34–49; Craig R. Thompson ‘Erasmus as Internationalist and Cosmopolitan’ *ARG* 46 (1955) 167–95; James D. Tracy ‘Erasmus Becomes a German’ *Renaissance Quarterly* 21 (1968) 281–8; Cornelis Reedijk ‘What is Typically Dutch in Erasmus?’ *Delta* (Amsterdam) 12 (1969) 73–80; Aloïs Gerlo ‘Erasmus et les Pays-Bas’ in *Colloquia Erasmi Turonensia* 1 97–111.
- 33 Of the province south-west of Holland
- 34 Acts 27:9–44
- 35 *Aeneid* 1.630
- 36 Opening words of the Apostles’ Creed
- 37 *peculiares quasdam preculas*
- 38 The same words occur earlier (‘Patterns’ 14:37); and see the closing lines of ‘A Pilgrimage’ 650:10–22. This paragraph, Erasmus says, condemns superstitions, not vows *per se*; if a Lutheran had been aboard, words appropriate to him too could have been added (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX

943A–B). Satire of superstition in the invocation of saints receives its strongest expression in ‘A Pilgrimage.’ For a good example of more formal, though not on that account more sincere, treatment see *Modus orandi Deum* LB V 1116A–1121B. It is said there that the necessity of invoking saints cannot be supported from Scripture nor, on the other hand, does Scripture forbid the practice (1116A–B). Many pious Christian customs and devotions are not specifically authorized or even mentioned in the Bible. Truly reverent veneration of saints in Christ’s name is acceptable to God. ‘And therefore we implore their intercession, because we deem ourselves unworthy of calling upon God himself’ (1116F–1117A). For answers to objections to his argument see 1117C–D, 1118E–F. Yes, there is a lot of superstition in some people’s invocation of saints, ‘which has often been reprov’d in my books.’ Yet the widespread abuses do not invalidate the devotion (1119C–E). Similarly with relics, processions, ‘holy’ days more pagan than Christian – and here he names some of the excesses described elsewhere, for instance in ‘A Pilgrimage’ and ‘A Fish Diet’ (1119E–1120E). In ‘The Shipwreck’ the style, rhetorical method, tone, and emphasis are very different from what is called for in a tractate such as *Modus orandi Deum*. Whether these two compositions are to be judged as two approaches, authentic but dissimilar ways of presenting the same truths, or incompatible and inconsistent depends on how closely they are read and on whether the reader has sufficient knowledge of Erasmus’ other writings. Published little more than a year apart (August 1523, c October 1524), both are typical, but they are written in different registers and not necessarily expected to appeal to the same readers. Convinced critics of certain common religious customs appreciated the evident hostility in ‘The Shipwreck’ to extravagance and superstition in the cult of saints. Those who thought Erasmus unfair or unorthodox in this colloquy would find a different tone in *Modus orandi Deum*, where, while denouncing manifest abuses, Erasmus expounds and supports orthodox principles and tolerates common practices if these are not abused.

39 Cf ‘The Godly Feast’ 177:3.

40 A jest, Erasmus finds it necessary to say, but what follows is of course serious (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 943C).

41 See the prayer ‘in time of pestilence’ in *Precationes* (LB V 1205F–1206B), which, rejecting the custom of those who call upon saints or ‘superstitious arts of magicians,’ appeals to the mercy of God.

42 *cinxit a prora et a puppi*. The phrase is a recollection of the description of the storm and shipwreck in Acts 27. The sailors (27:17) ‘used helps, undergirding the ship’ (ὀποζωννύντες τὸ πλοῖον, *accingentes navem* Vulg; Erasmus’ version has *subcingentes* LB VI 538A). His *Annotationes* have no comment on the passage. Apparently girding the ship posed no problem for him; it is merely another vivid, concrete detail in the narrative. Just how Paul’s ship was undergirded during the storm, however, has long been a difficulty for commentators on Acts. Was this done across the ship by hawsers passed under the hull, or longitudinally by interior bands or ropes stretched from stem to stern (*a prora et a puppi*)? Such a method is shown in pictures of ancient Egyptian ships, but Erasmus’ term *subcincta* in line 30 below implies a vertical ‘undergirding.’ On this question consult Henry J. Cadbury in *The Beginnings of Christianity* ed

F.J. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake (London 1920–33) part 1: *The Acts of the Apostles* v 345–54.

- 43 Jean Gerson (1363–1429), the great churchman and chancellor of Notre-Dame and the University of Paris, remembered for many writings on moral and mystical theology, efforts to find a solution to the Great Schism, and influence at the Council of Constance in 1415. His sympathy with reform and conciliarist views, in disputes over authority, would lead one to expect Erasmus' approval of him. But although a speaker in a later colloquy has heard of him as an 'outstanding theologian – his name is Gerson, I think' ('A Fish Diet' 712:6–7) and Erasmus refers to him civilly in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*,' he claims there that his own colloquy 'Faith' is a better summary of the Christian creed than anything of Gerson's (1102:33–6). Erasmus is respectful but more cool than cordial towards him: 'I read some of his shorter writings when I was young and thought them not at all bad' (Allen Ep 1581:87–8). In fact his library contained four volumes of Gerson (Husner 240 no 169), presumably the *editio princeps* (Cologne 1483–4). 'Gerson would be a writer of some standing if his lot had fallen in the present age' (*De copia* 11 CWE 24 318:17–18). He finds fault with Gerson's sermons and thinks his method of preaching and his dry style are of little help to modern preachers (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 857D). Perhaps, then, the fact that the priest's sermon is taken from Gerson means it was a discourse in the scholastic manner, without literary distinction or eloquence. On Gerson's style see *Ecclesiastes* LB v 874F; *Supputatio* LB IX 616D, 692C.
- 44 Identified by J.-P. Massaut as propositions in a brief tractate called *Requete pour les condamnés a mort* (text in *Oeuvres* VII part 1 341–3 no 323; I owe the reference to ASD 1-3 329n). They concern the necessity of making confession before death, emphasizing that this requirement may not be dispensed by anyone. Gerson wrote on confession in other tractates also, but the *Requete* seems the text Erasmus most likely meant, if indeed he had a specific one in mind. He himself drew up an interesting exposition, more clear and comprehensive than Gerson's, of the benefits of confession – nine, balanced by nine disadvantages – in his *Exomologesis* (1524) LB v 145A–170D, in which he speaks slightly of one of Gerson's minor writings on confession (151B–C).
- 45 Condemned by Parisian critics, this line is merely a joke satirizing the superstitions of sailors. If they like, the objectors may imagine that the speaker is a 'semi-Lutheran' (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 943D).
- 46 *sacram ancoram*, proverbial; see *Adagia* I i 24. The phrase occurs often in Erasmus.
- 47 *Adagia* III ii 13, and see note to LB text.
- 48 See Acts 27:43–4.
- 49 Objection to this paragraph by Erasmus' Spanish detractors is dismissed as foolish (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1086E–F).
- 50 Typical of Erasmus' impatience with excessive anxiety over venial faults and insignificant formalities. Cf, in the *Colloquies*, 'Youth' 97:16–22, 'The Godly Feast' 188:37–41 and n157, 'A Fish Diet'; *Exomologesis* LB v 151A–B and passim.
- 51 In this dialogue the priest Adam is superior to the friar in reverence, at least by Erasmian standards. In 'The Well-to-do Beggars' two Franciscan friars who stop at a village are clearly better men than the local priest.

- 52 St Dominic (1170–1221) founded the Order of Preachers, often called Dominicans. St Thomas Aquinas was a member of this order. Several saints were named Vincent, but the one intended here must be the Dominican St Vincent Ferrer (c 1350–1419), a native of Valencia. ‘St Peter’ could be St Peter Gonzalez (commonly called St Elmo; see n4 above) or, more likely, St Peter Martyr Veronensis (1205–52); both were renowned Dominicans.
- 53 She was a member of the Third Order of Dominicans. See ‘The Apotheosis of Reuchlin’ 250:41–251:2 and n43. Erasmus was not one of her votaries.
- 54 To literal-minded critics of these lines Erasmus’ answer was ‘I don’t consider the faith imperilled if someone makes a joke about a Dominican’s cowl’ (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 943E–F).
- 55 These were the opening words of the introit in the mass for the dead.
- 56 The priest’s successful method of reaching the shore is like Robinson Crusoe’s after his shipwreck. George Saintsbury thinks Defoe ‘not improbably’ borrowed from this colloquy (*The Earlier Renaissance* [Edinburgh and London 1901] 83).
- 57 *soluti tepore*. Because of exposure in the cold water they were too weak to recover when brought to a fire. Acts 28:2, part of the narrative Erasmus certainly had in mind when writing this colloquy, speaks of the ‘present rain’ and ‘the cold.’
- 58 Who were supported by tithes, a tenth of each layman’s produce or income
- 59 ‘The barbarous people showed us no little kindness’ (Acts 28:2).
- 60 See n32 above.
- 61 So *Adagia* IV vi 35: ‘No other people is more disposed to kindness and generosity’ (LB II 1084C)
- 62 Whoever suffers shipwreck twice should not blame Neptune (Publilius Syrus 264, quoted by Gellius 17.14); that is, if after surviving one shipwreck he is foolish enough to go to sea again he has no one to blame but himself. Cf Erasmus *Apophthegmata* LB IV 330C. To see a pilot who has lived to old age would be even more amazing than to see a despot who has grown old (Plutarch *Moralia* 147B *Septem sapientium convivium*).

INNS

Diversoria

First printed in the August 1523 edition.

As a frequent traveller but fastidious guest, Erasmus often had occasion to grumble about dangerous roads and inconvenient inns. In this sketch he draws a convincing and amusing picture of what must have been to him a tiresomely familiar experience. When resisting Pope Adrian VI's invitation to Rome a few months before this colloquy was published, he included 'sordida et incommoda diversoria,' as well as the Alps, among the perils of the journey (Allen Ep 1352:12-19 / CWE Ep 1352 14-23). Added to other discomforts, as far as Erasmus was concerned, were the overheated rooms in the inns, which he complained of as long as he lived.

In the colloquy Bertulf contrasts the French inn William praises and German inns he himself has visited, but wisely hesitates to generalize overmuch from his experiences (see 371:1-2 below). To find conflicting evidence in sixteenth-century travellers' narratives is easy enough. Not all French inns were as hospitable as the one Erasmus liked in Lyon. He tells of a harrowing night he spent in a village inn when travelling from Amiens to Paris in 1500 (Ep 119). Girolamo Aleandro (on whom see introduction to 'Penny-Pinching' 981) in 1514 found French inns very unsatisfactory (J. Hoyoux 'Les voyages d'Érasme et de Jérôme Aléandre' in *Colloquium Erasmianum* 318). Montaigne, whose *Journal de voyage* records his impressions on a journey to Italy via Switzerland and Bavaria (1580), gives a more favourable account, on the whole, than Erasmus' colloquy does: his dinner at a Swiss inn was satisfactory, though the bedrooms in some were cold and dirty. Other inns, for example those in Baden, were 'magnificent' (*Travel Journal*; Frame 879, 882). A later traveller, Thomas Coryat, found both good and not so good inns during his tour of Germany and Switzerland (*Crudities* II passim). He praises the inns of Basel and Zürich (II 174). Leo of Rozmital (c 1465) thought Spanish inns the worst of all (*Travels* 75 and note).

For another inn scene see 'The Well-to-do Beggars.'

An English translation of this dialogue by E.H., probably Edward Hake, was printed in London in 1566 (text in De Vocht *Earliest English Translations* 199-217 and Spurgeon 285-303, and see Devereux 4.14.1). At least two important nineteenth-century novelists adapted and enlarged Erasmus' colloquy: Scott in *Anne of Geierstein* (chapter 19) and Reade in *The Cloister and the Hearth* (chapters 24 and 33).

(7)
C One Dialogue. or

Colloquye of *Erasmus* (entituled *Diversoria*) Translated
out of Latteen into Englyshe: And
Imprynted, to the ende that the Iudgement
of the Learned maye be hadde
befoze the Translator procede in thersse.

By C.H.



C Imprinted at London in Fleetstreete, at the
signe of the Faucon by William Griffith,
and are to be solde at his Shop
in S. Dunstons Churchyard
in the west.

1566

Title-page of the English translation of *Diversoria*
London: William Griffith 1566
John Rylands University Library of Manchester

BERTULF,¹ WILLIAM

Bertulf Why do most people like to linger two or three days in Lyon? Once I've started on a journey I don't rest until I've reached my destination.

5 **William** On the contrary, I marvel that anybody can tear himself away from there.

Bertulf Just why is that?

William Because that's a place the companions of Ulysses couldn't have been torn away from. The Sirens are there.² No one's treated better in his
10 own home than at the inn³ there.

Bertulf What happens?⁴

William A woman was always standing by the table to enliven the meal with jokes and pleasantries (and the women there are awfully good-looking, too). First the hostess would come and welcome us, bidding us be merry
15 and accept with good grace whatever was served. She was followed by her daughter, a lovely woman with such delightful manners and speech that she could cheer Cato himself.⁵ They would chat with us not as with strangers but as if with old familiar friends.

Bertulf I know the politeness of the French.⁶

20 **William** But since they couldn't be present continuously – because there were chores to be looked after and other guests greeted – we were attended the whole time by a young miss who was well prepared for all the jokes, quite able to handle unassisted all the jests directed her way. She kept the talk going until the daughter returned, for the mother was rather old.

25 **Bertulf** But tell me, what was the fare like? Because stories don't fill the belly.

William Really sumptuous – so sumptuous I wonder they can take guests for so low a price. And when the meal is finished they feast a man with amusing stories, so he won't become bored. I fancied myself at home, not
30 abroad.

Bertulf What did you find in the bedrooms?

William Girls: laughing, jolly, sportive girls everywhere. They asked of their own accord if we had any dirty clothes; they washed them and brought them back – clean. In short, we saw nothing there but women and girls
35 except in the stable, though often girls invaded even that. They embrace the departing guests and take leave of them as affectionately as if they were all brothers or close relatives.⁷

Bertulf Maybe these manners suit the French. I prefer German ones as being more manly.⁸

40 **William** I've never seen Germany, as it happens, so please do be good enough to tell me how a guest is treated there.

Bertulf Whether the method of treatment is the same everywhere, I don't know. I'll tell you what I saw. No one greets the stranger, lest they seem to be on the lookout for a guest; that they consider base and degrading, unworthy of Germanic seriousness. When you've shouted a long time, someone finally
 5 sticks his head out of the little window of the stove room (where they spend most of their time until midsummer),⁹ like a turtle from his shell. You must ask him if you may put up there. If he doesn't shake his head, you know there's room for you. Those who ask where the stable is are directed by a wave of the hand. There you may look after your horse as you like, for no
 10 servant lifts a finger. Though if the inn's one of the better-known ones, a servant does show you the stable and even a place for your horse – a very poor place, since the better ones are reserved for the use of later guests, especially nobility. If you ask why, you hear instantly 'If you don't like this, look for another inn.'¹⁰ In the cities they furnish hay very reluctantly
 15 and sparingly, and it costs almost as much as oats itself. When the horse is provided for, you move into the stove room with all your impedimenta – leggings, luggage, and mud; everyone shares the same room.

William At French inns guests are shown to a chamber where they may undress, wash and warm themselves, or even rest if they wish.

Bertulf Nothing of the sort here. In the stove room you take off leggings, put on shoes, change underwear if you like; rain-drenched clothing you hang beside the stove, and you move there yourself in order to dry out. If you want to wash your hands, water is fetched, but usually it's so clean that afterwards you have to look for other water to wash it off with.

William I approve of men who aren't made effeminate by luxuries.

Bertulf But if you arrive at four o'clock, still you won't dine before nine and sometimes ten.

William Why?

Bertulf They don't prepare anything unless they see everyone's present:
 30 one service for all.

William Looking for a short cut.

Bertulf Exactly. Thus there are often eighty or ninety met together in the same stove room: travellers on foot, horsemen, traders, sailors, carriers, farmers, youths, women, the sick and the whole.

William The common life with a vengeance!

Bertulf One combs his hair, another wipes the sweat off, another cleans his rawhide boots or leggings, another belches garlic. To make a long story short, the confusion of tongues and people there is equal to that long ago in the tower of Babel.¹¹ But if they set eyes on a foreigner, whose dress gives him
 40 an air of distinction, they all stare intently at him, gazing as if at some new species of animal imported from Africa.¹² This is carried so far that after

they've sat down at table they turn round and continue to stare, not taking their eyes off him; they forget to eat.

William At Rome, Paris, and Venice nothing causes surprise.

5 **Bertulf** Meanwhile you're not allowed to ask for anything. When the evening's already late and no more arrivals are expected, an aged servant with white beard, cropped head, grim look, and dirty clothes makes his appearance.

William Just the sort to be cupbearer to Roman cardinals.¹³

Bertulf Glancing about, he silently counts the people in the stove room.

10 The more he sees there, the more energetically he fires up the stove, even though the weather's oppressively warm without it.¹⁴ Among these folk it's a principal part of good management to melt everybody in sweat. If someone not used to steam should open a window to escape suffocation, he hears instantly, 'Close it!' If you reply, 'I can't stand this,' they tell you, 'Then look
15 for another inn.'

William But nothing seems to me more dangerous than for so many persons to breathe the same warm air,¹⁵ especially when their bodies are relaxed and they've eaten together and stayed in the same place a good many hours. Quite apart from the belching of garlic, the breaking of wind, the stinking
20 breaths, many persons suffer from hidden diseases, and every disease is contagious. Undoubtedly many have the Spanish or, as some call it, French pox, though it's common to all countries.¹⁶ In my opinion, there's almost as much danger from these men as from lepers. Just imagine, now, how great the risk of plague.

25 **Bertulf** They're brave fellows. They laugh at these things and pay no attention to them.¹⁷

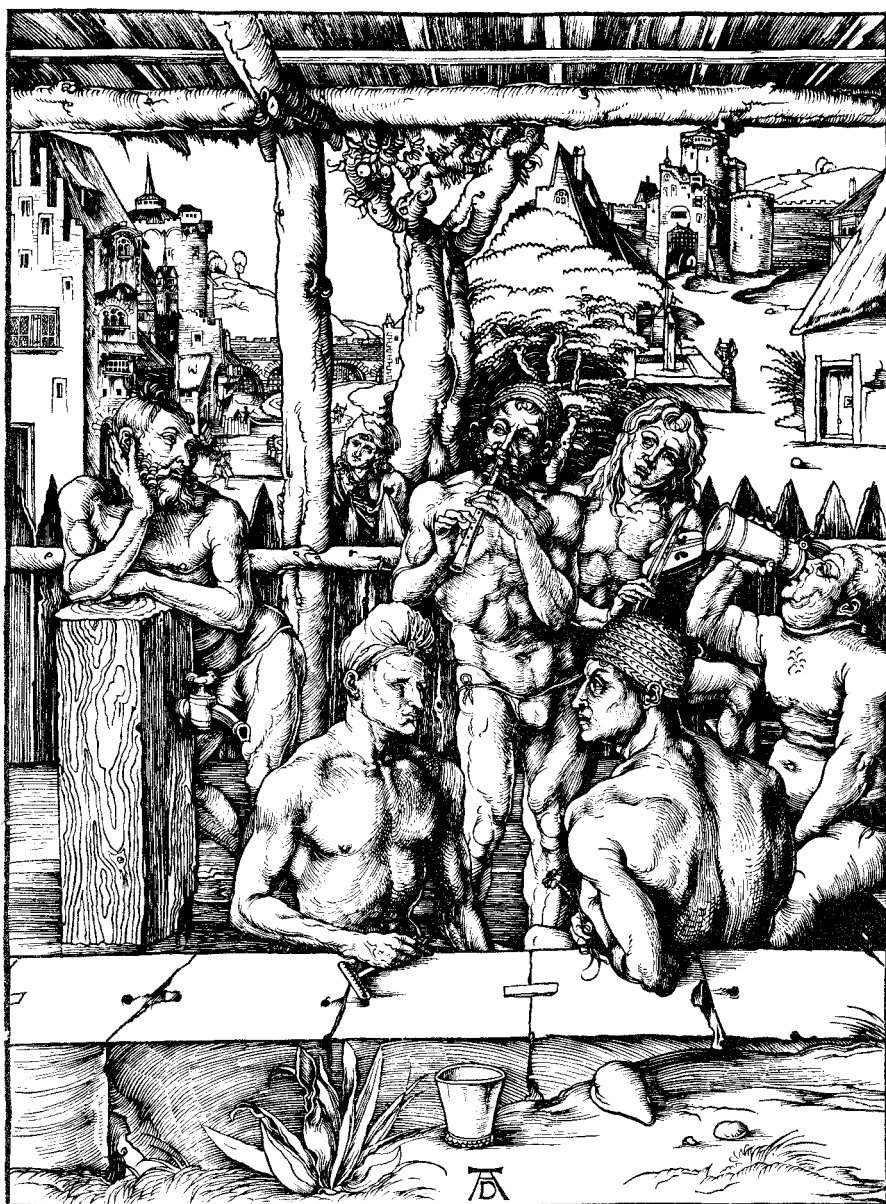
William But all the while their bravery endangers the public.

Bertulf What would you do? This is their custom and they're resolved not to depart from established ways.¹⁸

30 **William** Twenty-five years ago nothing was more customary among the Brabanters¹⁹ than public steam baths.²⁰ Now these are out of fashion everywhere, for the new pox has taught us to avoid them.

Bertulf But hear the rest. After a while the bearded Ganymede returns and lays the linen for as many tables as he thinks sufficient for the number
35 of diners. But good God! far from Milesian²¹ linen – you'd say sailcloth torn from the yard-arms. Guests are directed to every single table, eight at least to each one. Now those familiar with native custom sit down wherever they please, for there's no distinction between rich and poor, master and servant.

40 **William** That old-time equality, abolished by modern tyranny! In my opinion, Christ lived thus with his disciples.



The men's bath
Albrecht Dürer, c 1497
Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg

Bertulf After they're all seated, our gloomy Ganymede appears again and counts his company once more. Coming back shortly, he places beside each one a wooden dish²² and a spoon made of the same silver; then a glass cup; later on, bread, which everyone cleans up leisurely while the porridge is cooking. Sometimes you sit and wait almost an hour.

William None of the guests demands food during this time?

Bertulf None who's acquainted with the temper of the country. At last the wine is served – good Lord, anything but mellow! Sophisters²³ would need no other drink, so sharp and pungent is it. But if some guest, even offering a tip on the side, asks them to find him another kind of wine, at first they ignore him, but looking as if they're about to murder him. If you press them, they'll reply, 'So many counts and marquises have stayed here, and not one of them complained about my wine. If you don't like it, look for another inn.' For they regard only their own native nobility as men and display their coats of arms everywhere.²⁴ – So now the guests have a morsel to toss to the barking stomach.²⁵ Soon afterwards, amidst much ceremony, dishes arrive. The first generally has bits of bread dipped in meat broth, or, if it's fish day, in vegetable broth. Next another broth; after that some warmed-over meat or salt fish.

Again porridge, followed by more solid food, until at last they serve to the thoroughly tamed stomach roast meat or boiled fish – not altogether despicable, but they're stingy with it and quickly take it away. They arrange the whole meal in this fashion, alternating solid food and porridge, as actors alternate choruses and dramatic scenes. But they're careful to make the last act the best.²⁶

William The sign of a good poet, too.²⁷

Bertulf Moreover, it's sacrilege to say, 'Remove this dish; nobody's eating it.' You must sit there the appointed length of time, which I fancy they measure by water-clocks. Finally our bearded chap turns up, or the innkeeper himself, whose dress differs very little from that of the servants. He asks what we would like. Soon some rather better wine is brought. They admire heavy drinkers,²⁸ though the one who downs the most wine pays no more than the one who drinks the least.

William A strange characteristic of the race.

Bertulf At times, however, some spend on wine more than twice the cost of their dinner. But (before I finish with this feast) the uproar and tumult after they've all begun to grow heated from drink is astonishing.²⁹ In short, it's completely deafening.³⁰ Often jesters mingle with the guests.³¹ Despite the fact that no class of men is more detestable, you'd scarcely believe how fond of them the Germans are: they sing, chatter, shout, dance, and stamp, until the stove room seems about to collapse. You can't hear a word anybody else is saying. Yet all the while they think they're having the time of their lives, and there you must sit until midnight whether you want to or not.³²

William Finish the feast at last now; such a long drawn-out affair bores me too.

Bertulf I will. When the cheese – which is hardly acceptable to them unless full of mould and worms – is finally taken away, our bearded friend comes in carrying a tray on which he's chalked some circles and half-circles.³³ This he places on the table in grim silence – you'd say he was a Charon.³⁴ Those familiar with the scene lay down money, one man after another, until the tray is filled. Then, after checking those who've paid he counts the money to himself. If nothing's lacking, he nods his head.

10 **William** What if something's left over?

Bertulf *Maybe* he'd return it. They do, sometimes.

William Does no one protest against this villainous practice?

Bertulf No one in his right mind. For instantly he'd hear, 'What sort of man are you? You don't pay any more than the rest here.'

15 **William** Independent folk, these.

Bertulf But if someone tired out from travel wants to go to bed soon after dinner, he's told to wait until others go, too.

William Plato's republic, it seems.³⁵

20 **Bertulf** Then everyone is shown his nest; actually a mere cubicle, since it contains only beds and nothing else you could use or steal.

William Is it clean?

Bertulf Like the dinner: the linen washed perhaps six months before.³⁶

William And what about the horses?

Bertulf They're treated on the same principle as the men.

25 **William** But is this treatment the same everywhere?

Bertulf In some places it's more civil, in others rougher than that I've described. But in general it's like this.

30 **William** What if I were to tell you now how guests are treated in that region of Italy called Lombardy, again in Spain, then in England and Wales? For the English follow in part the French custom, in part the German, as they're a mixture of these two peoples. The Welsh boast that they're the native English.³⁷

Bertulf I beg you to tell me, because I've never had occasion to visit them.

35 **William** Not convenient just now, for the sailor bade me be on hand at three o'clock if I didn't want to be left behind, and he has my luggage. There'll be opportunity some other time to have our fill of talk.

NOTES

- 1 Hilarius Bertholf, a Fleming whom Erasmus had met in Ghent, served him as a secretary and messenger in 1522–4. He appears in 'The Poetic Feast,' 'The Philological Society,' and 'The Sermon.' See A. Roersch *L'humanisme belge*

- (Brussels 1910) 69–82; Franz Bierlaire *La familia d'Erasmus: contribution à l'histoire d'humanisme* (Paris 1968) 59–61; Allen Ep 1257:13n; Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 66–7; CEBR.
- 2 Homer *Odyssey* 12:165–200
 - 3 *pandocheo*, a transliterated Greek word. Elsewhere Erasmus uses *diversorium*.
 - 4 The lines that follow recall Erasmus' brief visit to Lyon in August 1506 when he was on his way to Italy (Allen Ep 2473:9–10). The city and the pleasant inn there seem to have made an indelible impression upon him. When he was thinking seriously in 1530 of leaving Freiburg, Lyon was one of the places he considered (Allen Ep 2410:44–57; cf Ep 3008:70–83). In the end he remained in Freiburg until his final move back to Basel in May 1535 (Allen Ep 3025:18n). Coryat, describing his stay in Lyon in 1608, says that The Three Kings inn was 'the fayrest Inne in the whole citie' and the favourite of distinguished visitors (*Crudities* 1 211). On Lyon in the time of Erasmus see a description by L. Romier in 'Lyons and Cosmopolitanism at the Beginning of the French Renaissance' *BHR* 11 (1949); translation in *French Humanism 1470–1600* ed Werner L. Gundersheimer (New York 1970) 90–108.
 - 5 Cato the Censor, famed for probity and austerity. See 'The Godly Feast' 192:28–193:15 and n198.
 - 6 An earlier allusion to their parsimony offended some French readers see 'The Profane Feast' (n46).
 - 7 Nikolaus von Popplau, a German who visited England in 1484 (and had an interview with Richard III) found English women as amorous and flirtatious as they were beautiful. Those at an inn where he stayed alarmed him by their offers to kiss him (see quotations in W.D. Robson-Scott *German Travellers in England 1400–1800* [Oxford 1953] 14–15). On the English freedom with kisses see 'The Lover of Glory' 970:34–5 and n54.
 - 8 An anonymous account by an Italian of his journey through Austria and Germany and then to England in 1497–8 speaks of the cordiality with which he was treated in Ulm, Worms, and Cologne. 'The nearer you go to the west, the more civilized people are' (*Two Italian Accounts of Tudor England* ed and trans C.V. Malfatti [Barcelona 1953] 7, 11, 15–16). Still another contemporary traveller, Antonio de Beatis, who thought Lyon 'the fairest town in France,' agreed about the cordiality of the women there but found those in Germany equally attractive and pleasant. Unlike the traveller in the present colloquy, he praises the German inns highly and apparently enjoyed them. He reports that the only fireplace in a house is in the kitchen; other rooms have stoves (*Travel Journal* 78, 80, 102, 139, and *passim*). On de Beatis see 'The Godly Feast' n251. A memorable record survives in Johann Kessler's *Sabbata* of a chance meeting and conversation at a hospitable inn at Jena, early in March 1522, between Luther (who does not identify himself) and two Swiss students en route to Wittenberg, where they hope to meet that famous teacher who is talked of everywhere (text in *Historische Verein des St Gallen* [1902] 76ff; translation in *Preserved Smith Life and Letters of Martin Luther* [Boston and New York 1911] 141–3).
 - 9 The text has *aestuarii* 'hot-house'; elsewhere and in his letters Erasmus regularly uses *hypocaustum*. In ancient Roman houses the *hypocaustum* was a chamber heated from below through pipes. In the *Colloquies* and other contemporary writings *hypocaustum* means the stove – which was sometimes a very large

one – or the room where it was placed. Every house in Germany had a stove, Coryat remarks (*Crudities* 1 296). In the inn of this colloquy the stove is in the public room. Erasmus was always uncomfortable when near stoves and often complains about them. See Allen Ep 1248:10n / CWE Ep 1248 n5 and CWE Ep 1258 n18. To the references in those notes may be added Allen Epp 1316:22–3, 1342:188–93, 521–5, 528–33, 570–1, 694–6, 1422:25–35, 1423:23–5, 44–5, 1434:57–8, 1585:19–20 / CWE Epp 1316:24–6, 1342:212–17, 568–73, 576–81, 620–1, 764–6, 1422:27–38, 1423:24–6, 46–7, 1434:64–5, 1585:23–5, Allen Epp 2055:16–18, 2112:21–3, 2118:44–5, 3043:25–7.

One of the disadvantages of living in Germany or adjacent to Basel, he wrote in 1517, was the stoves (Allen Epp 597:48–9, 794:63 / CWE Epp 597:54, 794:69); but in the house in Basel he rented from Froben a few years later, Froben installed a fireplace for him in one of the rooms (Allen Ep 1316:38n / CWE Ep 1316 n10, and cf Allen Ep 1422:27–9 / CWE Ep 1422:30–1). Johann von Botzheim did the same in 1523 when Erasmus visited Constance (cf Allen Ep 1382:60–1 / CWE Ep 1382:67). Stoves in German houses burned almost all year, he says (Allen Epp 1342:523–4, 1553:32–5 / CWE Ep 1342:571–2, 1533:36–8), and for that reason he thought the houses unhealthy (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 711E). A homesick German student in Italy (1557) might long for the stove-heated rooms of Germany (Thorndike *University Records* 375) but they did not suit Erasmus. Montaigne allowed that the stifling heat of German stoves gave strangers headaches but thought that in other respects they were just as satisfactory as fireplaces (*Essays* 3.13 ‘Of Experience’; Frame 828).

- 10 Burton quotes the servant’s words in his introduction to *The Anatomy of Melancholy* ‘Democritus Junior to the Reader’ (1 28).

11 Genesis 11:1–9

12 ‘Always something new out of Africa’ was proverbial; *Adagia* III vii 10.

- 13 Ironic because the prototype of cupbearers in mythology was a handsome youth, unlike the bearded, gloomy Ganymede of this colloquy (cf ‘The Epicurean’ 1086:31), and because of the contrast between the boorish diners at the inn and the splendour of Roman cardinals. Erasmus was critical of their number, wealth, and dress; see *De bello Turcico* LB v 365E; *Ecclesiastes* LB v 986A–D; ‘The Well-to-do Beggars’ 480:26–9 and nn92–3. He questioned their usefulness (Allen Ep 2375: 46–53). So did others. Pope Pius II (1460) denounced their luxurious living (*Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: The Commentaries of Pius II* trans Florence A. Gragg, ed Leona C. Gabel [New York 1959; repr 1962] 150). Paolo Cortese, head of the papal chancery, wrote a book *De cardinalatu* on the nature, dignity, and requirements of the ideal cardinalate; it was published after the author’s death (1510). In 1514 the Fifth Lateran Council bade cardinals refrain from extravagance and ostentation ([Bull on reform of the curia], On cardinals; Tanner I 617–21, especially 618:1–5). Luther attacked them vigorously in *An den christlichen Adel* (WA 6 416:27–417:21 / LW 44 141–2). The recommendations of the *Consilium de emendanda ecclesiae* to Paul III in 1537 were as candid about the cardinalate as about other abuses (Kidd *Documents* 312–13 no 126 [8–9]). The Council of Trent ordered the cardinals to live more plainly (session 25 [1563] Decree on general reform, chapter 1; Tanner II 784–5). In 1535 Erasmus heard and repeated credible rumours that Paul III intended to make him a cardinal. The first official evidence of the pope’s intention was his

- offer of the provostship of Deventer. By declining this opportunity Erasmus made it clear that he was not interested in becoming a cardinal. See Allen Epp 3007:5n, 3033, 3034, 3052, 3066:44–8.
- 14 Erasmus disliked heat, indoors or outdoors; see Allen Ep 1114:14–16 and note. But the Germans spend most of their lives in stove rooms (*Adagia* II iii 65).
 - 15 See an interesting letter written in 1524 to an English friend who was a physician (Ep 1532). Erasmus had firm opinions on warm air, open versus closed windows, sanitation, and the relation of such things to disease.
 - 16 Venereal disease: syphilis or what was taken to be such; the terms were not precise. See 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n45. 'A Marriage in Name Only' concerns some of the social consequences of the disease.
 - 17 Instead of learning restraint from the prevalence of the pox, men turn it into a joke. See Allen Ep 2285:21–8, where Erasmus adds that the pox is just as common among the upper classes as among the lower orders. This point is emphasized in 'A Marriage in Name Only.' In 'The Knight without a Horse' a social climber is advised that unless he is 'decorated with the French pox' he will never pass for a knight (884:22–5).
 - 18 For other references to custom in the *Colloquies* see 'The Profane Feast' n58.
 - 19 the Brabanters] Substituted for 'us' (*nos*) in the September 1531 edition
 - 20 *thermae publicae*. See Abel Lefranc *La vie quotidienne au temps de la Renaissance* (Paris 1938) 162. German physicians prescribed hot baths (*balnea*) for every ailment, if Erasmus is to be believed (Allen Ep 3106:6–8). Leo of Rozmital calls the public baths 'Bruges baths' (*Travels* 26, 31n). By the date of this colloquy they had acquired a bad reputation because of suspicion that the pox was spread by water. A related reason was that in such establishments barber-surgeons practised their art or lack of art (H. Brabant 'Epidémies et médecins au temps d'Erasmus' in *Colloquia Erasmi Turonensis* I 521–4). Men and women are said to have bathed together in some (Leo of Rozmital *Travels* 31n); an epigram by Ben Jonson makes 'hot-house' synonymous with 'whorehouse' (ed C.H. Hereford and Percy Simpson, 11 vols [Oxford 1925–52] VIII 29). They have been compared to modern 'massage parlours' (Peter Partner *Renaissance Rome 1500–1559* [Berkeley and Los Angeles 1976] 100). 'Stews' had the same connotations.
 - 21 Luxurious, exceptionally fine. See *Adagia* I iv 8 for various proverbial sources, and cf *Parabola* CWE 23 140:33; *De copia* CWE 24 393:4. Montaigne did not require a table-cloth, but to dine without a suitable table-napkin, 'as Germans do,' made him uncomfortable (*Essays* 3.13 'Of Experience' and *Travel Journal*; Frame 830, 884).
 - 22 A detail noticed by Montaigne also (*Travel Journal*; Frame 880)
 - 23 University students of logic and philosophy, especially those who 'dispute' or debate
 - 24 Coryat notes this custom in German houses and especially in the courtyards of inns (*Crudities* I 296). The pretender in 'The Knight without a Horse,' who wants to pass himself off as a nobleman, is told to devise arms and hang them up 'at the gates of every inn you happen to stop at' (882:20–35). Montaigne also mentions this custom (*Travel Journal*; Frame 882).
 - 25 Horace *Satires* 2.2.7
 - 26 *Adagia* I ii 35

27 Cicero *Ad Quintum fratrem* 1.1.46

28 'People here,' writes Erasmus from Basel in 1526, 'disregard doctors and don't drink daintily' (Allen Ep 1735:10–11); they throw physic to the dogs. The fondness of Germans for copious eating and drinking was a commonplace in the writings of contemporaries, a fixed idea in the minds of foreigners and even of many Germans themselves. See a sermon of 1498 by Geiler von Kaiserberg (1445–1510), the famous preacher of Strasbourg, on gluttony and drunkenness as depicted in Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* (in Strauss *Manifestations of Discontent* 211–15). The Germans, according to Hutten's *Inspicientes* (1520), 'are guzzlers from ancient times and addicted to drunkenness; nor may it ever be counted a fault amongst Germans to be in liquor' (*Opera* IV 301:75). See Johannes Janssen *History of the German People at the Close of the Middle Ages* trans M.A. Mitchell and A.M. Christie, 16 vols and index (London 1896–1925) xv (1910) 228–59, 387–424 on Germans' fondness for drink; xii (1907) 210–18 on contemporary books and tracts on this national trait. Montaigne speaks of Germans as steeped in wine, drinkers of all wines with equal pleasure; they use bigger glasses at the end of a meal than at the beginning (*Essays* 2.2 'Of Drunkenness'; Frame 246, 247, 248). In Basel he heard some complaint about local drunkenness (*Travel Journal*; Frame 879).

Tradition played a part in preserving these impressions. Tacitus had reported that the German tribes did not hesitate to spend both day and night drinking (*Germania* 22). In the Middle Ages Tacitus was scarcely known or read, but manuscripts of his writings were recovered in the fourteenth century; Boccaccio (d 1375) had copies. After the *editio princeps* was published in 1470 (Venice) the *Germania* became more readily available to humanist readers and others and offered a basis for comparison of ancient and modern German customs. But even Erasmus, who writes candidly about Germans and drink, warns against indicting a whole nation. One should not accuse all Germans of drunkenness just because some are toppers (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 1068E). At least a few travellers found the tales about German drinking exaggerated. Coryat was one of these: 'Truly I have heard Germany much dispraised for drunkennesse before I saw it; but that vice reigneth no more there (that I could perceive) then in other countries. For I saw no man drunke in any place of Germany, though I was in many goodly Cities and in much notable company' (*Crudities* II 174).

29 With this dinner compare Erasmus' description of one at an inn in Breisach, *en route* to Strasbourg, in September 1519 (Allen Ep 867:1–19 / CWE Ep 867:2–21).

30 In a later colloquy mimes or buffoons are acceptable as entertainers but only if they do little or no speaking. See 'A Feast of Many Courses' 806:30–41.

31 For another allusion to jesters at an inn see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 473:15.

32 Coryat too noticed the long wait for dinner, adding that at Basel 'they use to sitte long at supper, even an houre and a halfe at the least, or almost two houres' (*Crudities* II 174); and so do the Dutch (II 360). Or even longer in Basel, according to Montaigne (*Travel Journal*; Frame 881).

33 German innkeepers always kept a piece of chalk in their pockets for this purpose; 'they eat and drink according to chalk' (Richard Pace *De fructu qui ex doctrina percipitur* [1517] ed Frank Manley and Richard S. Sylvester [New York 1967] 87).

- 34 In Greek mythology ferryman of the Styx. He was strict about payment by his passengers. See 'Charon.'
- 35 Because everyone in the same class or group is subject to the same rules
- 36 A complaint repeated in 'A Marriage in Name Only' 853:39–854:2 and by Montaigne (*Travel Journal*; Frame 879)
- 37 ἀντόχθονας *Anglos*. On the Greek word see *Adagia* I viii 86. The statement is misleading because it has 'English' instead of 'British' or 'Britons.' The Celts, ancestors of the Welsh, were in the British Isles long before Angles and Saxons arrived there. What is missing in Erasmus' sentence is any indication that ancient Britons were Celtic, not English; but see *Adagia* II vi 43. *A Relation of England* records that 'the Welsh people are generally supposed to have been the original inhabitants of the island' and they themselves affirmed they were descendants of the Trojans (19).

THE YOUNG MAN AND THE HARLOT

Adolescentis et scorti

First printed in the August 1523 edition.

As a subject for edifying fiction, the penitent harlot has such a long literary pedigree that we cannot say for certain which traditions or versions were most familiar to Erasmus or furnished most hints for this colloquy. The oldest form of the Thaïs legend, in which a man of virtue, Paphnutius (or Serapion or Bessarion in other texts), converts the sinful Thaïs, is found in the *Vitae patrum* (PL 73 661–4). This story was retold briefly in the medieval *Legenda aurea* or *Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine, in the *Acta sanctorum* (8 October), and elsewhere. Also in the *Vitae patrum* is an account by St Ephraem of Edessa of another heroine of hagiographical legend, Mary the Harlot, who is rescued from a brother by her uncle, the hermit Abraham (PL 73 651–60; translation in Helen Waddell *The Desert Fathers* [New York 1936] 298–302). For her history see the article on Abraham (16 March) in Alban Butler *Lives of the Saints* ed and rev Herbert Thurston and Donald Attwater, 4 vols (New York [1956]) 1 606. Some parts of this story resemble the tale of Paphnutius.

In all probability Erasmus knew the versions in the *Vitae patrum* and *Legenda aurea* and derived his main plot from one of these sources. There is also the remarkable *Paphnutius* by the nun Hrotsvita of Gandersheim (tenth century), who wrote six Latin plays (*Hrotsvita opera* ed P. de Winterfeld [Berlin 1902]). Since these were first printed in 1501 at Nürnberg, Erasmus could have read them. It has been argued that his colloquy is indebted to Hrotsvita's *Paphnutius* (Smith *Key* 22–3). Perhaps, but there is no clear proof.

Whichever version or versions of the legend may have contributed to this colloquy, Erasmus' artistic modernizing has claims to originality. As a dramatic scene his dialogue is wholly and successfully contemporary in tone and setting. It is not a saint's legend or a mere *exemplum*. It moralizes without excessive didacticism, and its characters come alive; they are not simply stereotypes from pulpit literature. In the hagiographic versions and in Hrotsvita's play the man is an elderly hermit or 'holy abbot' in disguise. In Erasmus' dialogue he is closer to the woman in age, an acquaintance and apparently one of her former and favourite clients. Again, in *Paphnutius* Thaïs is converted almost instantly; in the colloquy Lucretia puts up an argument before she finally admits the wickedness and wretchedness of her present life. In *Paphnutius* she herself says the room is so secret that it is known to nobody but God; in the colloquy the young man raises this question.

Erasmus' little drama begins with Lucretia and ends when her conversion is effected, whereas the first part of Hrotsvita's *Paphnutius* is taken up with an explanation of music and has almost nothing to do with Thaïs.

The narratives in the *Vitae patrum* and the *Legenda aurea* are brief and artless. Only in the nineteenth century did the legend begin to receive the studied sensual or sentimental treatment now popular. In Anatole France's *Thaïs* (1890) Paphnutius, unable to forget Thaïs, confesses his passionate love for her, but in the end she turns him away and dies a penitent. Rejected and abandoned, he is left in total despair. Massenet's popular opera *Thaïs* (1894) follows the plot of France's novel.

Erasmus had to defend this colloquy against the charge of lasciviousness (Allen Epp 2037:22–6, 2300:109–14). He contended that the general effect of the dialogue is to impress upon young people 'the safeguarding of their chastity' ('The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1102:23–4).

Nicholas Leigh's English translation of this colloquy, accompanied by his version of *Proci et puellae*, was published in London in 1568; text in Spurgeon 345–56. Hrotsvita's *Paphnutius* is translated by Christopher St John in his *Plays of Roswitha* (London 1923) 94–129; reprinted in *Medieval Literature in Translation* ed Charles W. Jones (New York 1950) 210–27. On the history of the legend consult O.R. Kuehne *A Study of the Thaïs Legend* (Philadelphia 1922).

LUCRETIA,¹ SOPHRONIUS²

Lucretia Welcome, Sophronius darling! Back to us at last? Seems to me you've been gone an age. I scarcely knew you at first.

5 **Sophronius** Why so, my dear Lucretia?

Lucretia Because you've come back with a bit of beard you didn't use to have.³ – What's the matter, sweetheart? You look gloomier than usual.

Sophronius I want to have a talk with you – in private.

Lucretia Oh, aren't we alone, my cocky?⁴

10 **Sophronius** Let's withdraw to a more secret place.

Lucretia All right, let's go into the inner bedroom if you like.

Sophronius This place doesn't yet seem secret enough for me.

Lucretia How come you're so bashful all of a sudden? Here's my private dressing room; it's so dark we'll hardly be able to see each other.

15 **Sophronius** Examine every crack.

Lucretia There's not a single crack.

Sophronius Nobody close by who might overhear us?

Lucretia Not even a fly,⁵ dearie. What are you waiting for?

Sophronius Shall we escape God's notice here?

Lucretia Of course not: he sees through everything.

Sophronius And the angels' notice?

Lucretia Impossible to keep out of their sight.

Sophronius Then how is it that men aren't ashamed to do in the sight of
5 God and in the presence of the holy angels what they would be ashamed to
do before men?⁶

Lucretia What's got into you? Have you come here to preach to me? Put on
a Franciscan cowl, get up into a pulpit,⁷ and let's hear you, my bearded⁸ lad.

Sophronius I wouldn't object to doing just that if I could reclaim you from
10 this sort of life. It's not only the most shameful but the most miserable kind
as well.

Lucretia Why so, love? I must have some source of income. Everybody lives
by his profession.⁹ This is my work, my livelihood.

Sophronius I'd like to have a talk with you on this very subject, my Lucretia,
15 after you've calmed down a little.

Lucretia Save your sermon for another occasion. Let's enjoy ourselves¹⁰
now, Sophronius dear.

Sophronius Whatever you do, you do for money.

Lucretia You're not far wrong!

Sophronius You won't lose money: I'll pay you four times the usual sum if
20 you'll only listen to me.

Lucretia Say what you please.

Sophronius First answer me this: have you any enemies?

Lucretia Not one.

Sophronius And are there, on the other hand, any women you hate?
25

Lucretia In so far as they deserve it.

Sophronius Then if you could do them a favour, would you do it?

Lucretia I'd rather mix poison for them!

Sophronius But think now whether you could do anything that would
30 give them greater pleasure than to see you living this most disgraceful and
wretched life. And what could you have done more grievous to those who
wish you well?

Lucretia It was my fate.

Sophronius What is, as a rule, the hardest thing of all for persons deported
35 to islands or banished to the wildest frontiers of the earth, you've chosen of
your own free will.

Lucretia What's that?

Sophronius Haven't you voluntarily renounced all ties – father, mother,
40 brothers, sisters, paternal and maternal aunts, and others to whom nature
has bound you? For they're ashamed of you, and you can't bear to come
within sight of them.

Lucretia Oh, no, I've exchanged my loved ones, to my profit, for instead of a few I now have many – of whom you're one. I've always looked upon you as a brother.¹¹

Sophronius Quit joking and treat the subject seriously, as it deserves. A girl
5 with so many friends has no friend at all, Lucretia, believe me. Those who resort to you treat you not as a friend but rather as an object of contempt.¹² See how low you've fallen, you wretched creature! Christ held you so dear that he redeemed you with his own blood,¹³ so dear that he wanted you to share the heavenly inheritance;¹⁴ and you make yourself a public sewer that
10 every Tom, Dick, and Harry – the dirty, the vile, the diseased – resorts to and empties his filth into. If you haven't yet caught the new contagion called the Spanish pox,¹⁵ you can't long escape it. If you do get it, you'll be the most miserable creature alive, even if you prosper in every other respect, even if you have fame and fortune. What will you be but a living corpse? You used
15 to think obeying your mother burdensome; now you're at the beck and call of an utterly repulsive bawd. You were fed up with parental reproofs; here you must often endure beatings by drunken, maddened whoremongers. To do some of the housework at home in return for bed and board disgusted you; here what commotions, what late hours you put up with!

Lucretia Where has this new preacher come from?

Sophronius Now think it over. This bloom of beauty that draws lovers to you will soon fade. What a pitiable sight you'll be then! What dung heap will be more contemptible than you? You'll change from whore to bawd, a distinction that doesn't fall to everyone. And if it does come, what is there
25 more wicked or more closely tied to devilish spitefulness?

Lucretia Almost everything you say is true, my Sophronius. But where did you pick up this newfangled holiness? Generally you're the wildest playboy of them all.¹⁶ Nobody used to come here oftener or at more inconvenient times than you did. You've been in Rome,¹⁷ I hear.

Sophronius I have.

Lucretia But ordinarily people return from there worse than they went.¹⁸ How come it happened otherwise for you?

Sophronius I'll tell you: because I didn't go to Rome for the same reason or in the same fashion. Others commonly go to Rome intending to return worse
35 – and abundant opportunities for that purpose are at hand there. I set out with an honest man by whose urging I took a book along instead of a flask: the New Testament, translated by Erasmus.¹⁹

Lucretia Erasmus? He's more than heretic²⁰ they say.

Sophronius You don't mean that man's reputation has reached even this
40 place?²¹

Lucretia No name is better known to us.

Sophronius Have you seen him?

Lucretia Never, but I'd like very much to see the person I've heard so many bad reports of.

Sophronius From bad men, perhaps.

5 **Lucretia** Oh, no: from reverend gentlemen.²²

Sophronius Which ones?

Lucretia I'm not free to tell.

Sophronius Why?

10 **Lucretia** Because if you blabbed about it and the news reached their ears, a sizable share of my income would be gone.

Sophronius Have no fear: you'll be telling it to a stone.²³

Lucretia Let me whisper it.

15 **Sophronius** Silly, why do you have to whisper when we're alone? So God won't overhear?²⁴ – Good heavens, you're a pious whore, I see; you give alms to the mendicants!

Lucretia But I make more profit from these mendicants than from you rich men.

Sophronius They rob honest matrons in order to throw their money on villainous whores.

20 **Lucretia** But go on about the book.

Sophronius I will; and so much the better. In it Paul, who doesn't know how to lie, taught me that neither whores nor whoremongers shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.²⁵ After reading this I began to reflect: The estate I expect to inherit from my father is a modest one, yet I'd rather renounce all whores
25 than be disinherited by him. How much more care should I take lest my heavenly Father disinherit me! Against a father who disinherits or disowns, human laws offer some protection; against the God who disinherits, there is no remedy.²⁶ So straightway I made it a rule to have nothing to do with whores.

30 **Lucretia** If you could contain yourself,²⁷ that is.

Sophronius A large part of continence is the will to be continent. As a last resort one can marry.²⁸ At Rome²⁹ I poured out the whole Augean stable³⁰ of my sins into the bosom of a confessor. He exhorted me, wisely and with many words, to purity of mind and body, the reading of Scripture, frequent
35 prayers, sobriety of life. The only penance he imposed was that I should kneel at the high altar and recite the psalm *Miserere mei, Deus*,³¹ and, if I had the money, give a florin³² to some needy person. When I expressed surprise that he inflicted so light a penance for so much whoring, he replied good-humouredly, 'Son, if you truly repent and change your way of life, I
40 don't care much about penance. But if you persist, lust itself will, in the end, exact more than enough penance from you, even if a priest does not impose

it. Look at me: blear-eyed, palsied, stooped. Yet I was once such as you say you've been up to now, so I've had a taste of it.³³

Lucretia Then I've lost my Sophronius, I see.

Sophronius No, on the contrary you've gained him. Before, he was ruined; 5 he was neither his own friend nor yours. Now he truly loves you and longs for your salvation.

Lucretia Then what do you advise, Sophronius dear?

Sophronius First of all, that you abandon this life. You're still a girl: your stain can be washed away. Or get married. I'll contribute something towards 10 the dowry.³⁴ Or enter some religious house for fallen women, or move to a different place and put yourself into the family of some respectable housewife. I offer you my help for whichever of these you choose.

Lucretia I'll love you for it, Sophronius. Look out for me; I'll follow your advice.

15 **Sophronius** But meantime get away from here.

Lucretia What, so quickly?

Sophronius Why not today rather than tomorrow, if postponement means loss, and delay danger?

Lucretia Where am I to go?

20 **Sophronius** Collect all your belongings and give them to me this evening. A servant will take them secretly to some reliable woman. Sometime later I'll take you out, as though for a walk. You'll hide at the woman's place at my expense until I make arrangements for you, as I soon will.

Lucretia Well, Sophronius, I trust myself entirely to you.

25 **Sophronius** Some day you'll be glad you did.³⁵

NOTES

- 1 The earliest Thaïs in legend was a courtesan who accompanied Alexander in his Asiatic wars (see Dryden's poem 'Alexander's Feast'). Here she is called Lucretia, an appropriate name because familiar to many readers from the oft-told tale of the Roman matron who was raped and then killed herself (Livy 1.57–60; Ovid *Fasti* 2.685–852). The story was known to English readers from Gower's *Confessio amantis* and Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*; later from Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*. Apparently 'Lucrezia' was a common name of Roman courtesans (Peter Partner *Renaissance Rome 1500–1559* [Berkeley and Los Angeles 1976] 99; Smith *Key* 23). If so, the name is doubly appropriate here, for Erasmus' Lucretia is a harlot, yet becomes virtuous, and it is in Rome that Sophronius makes his confession.
- 2 The supposition that the name may stand for Conradus Pellicanus (Smith *Key* 23) is based on nothing more than the fact that he had gone on pilgrimage to Rome in 1517. Erasmus had used the name 'Sophronius' in 'The Godly Feast' as suitable to a good counsellor. If the Sophronius of that colloquy represented

Pellicanus, as Smith thought was probable (see 'The Godly Feast' n1), the case for Pellicanus in the present dialogue would be strengthened, but the identification remains conjectural.

- 3 *barbatulus*. See 'Patterns' n68.
- 4 *mentula* 'penis,' an obscenity (as in Catullus 115.8; Martial 6.23.2), and here a term of flippant endearment as well. For another occurrence of the obscene expression, involving a practical joke played on Erasmus by means of a forged letter, see Allen xi Appendix 24 360:88–94; but see first the introduction to that letter (357–8).
- 5 *Adagia* II i 84
- 6 A similar passage is found in *Enchiridion* (LB v 58B–C / Holborn 123:19–26 / CWE 66 116); cf *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1149C. Most versions of the Thais legend have a scene of this kind.
- 7 A comment like Lucretia's is made in another colloquy, 'The New Mother' (601:3–4). Although the Dominicans were officially designated the Order of Preachers, Franciscans too were very active in the pulpit.
- 8 *barbatule*. See n3 above.
- 9 *Adagia* I vii 33. Lucretia's excuse for labouring in her vocation is like Falstaff's; see 'Military Affairs' n18.
- 10 *vivamus* 'let's live.' The ambiguity in 'live' is recalled in *Adagia* III v 66. For an exposition of true and false pleasures see 'The Epicurean.'
- 11 Another ambiguity for some readers, for 'brother' could mean 'lover' (as in Martial 10.65.14; Tibullus 3.1.23)
- 12 *matula* 'chamber-pot'
- 13 Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Rev 5:9
- 14 Rom 8:17; Eph 1:10–11; Col 1:12, 3:24; Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 1:4
- 15 See 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n45 above. In his *De integritate* (Strasbourg 1505) B2 verso ff, Erasmus' friend Jakob Wimpfeling warns clerics of the evils of prostitution and includes a vivid description of venereal disease.
- 16 *nugator omnium nugacissimus*
- 17 The notion that the dialogue takes place in Rome (Smith *Key* 23) is mistaken. Lucretia refers a moment later to his returning from there, which is not the way she would allude to Sophronius' visit to her if they were both in Rome at the present time. See also 385:32–3 below.
- 18 The opinion of Erasmus and many others. See 'Benefices' 47:22–7 and n10. On Rome as a destination for pilgrims see 'Rash Vows' (where Erasmus makes the same comment about Jerusalem [37:9–31 and n5]), especially n14.
- 19 On the chronology of Erasmus' preparation for the edition of the New Testament see Erika Rummel *Erasmus' 'Annotations' on the New Testament* (Toronto 1986) 18–26. With the first edition of his Greek New Testament and annotations to it (1516), Erasmus printed the Vulgate translation, with some changes of his own, but in the second edition (1519) used his own version; later, in the fourth edition (1527), he printed both the Vulgate and his own version side by side. The importance of his translation is sometimes overlooked, first because of its novelty and the even greater importance of the Greek New Testament of 1516, the first printed edition to be published, second because of the growing interest in vernacular translations, third because until recently copies or reprints of Erasmus' Latin New Testament were not easy to find. In its

own time it received wide attention. Erasmus intended it for private reading, he says, not as a replacement of the Vulgate; he thought it should be read with his annotations of the text (Allen Ep 2807:24–56). As he must have expected, his opponents condemned it (for an example see the colloquy ‘The Sermon’) but it was a significant, successful, and influential book, not only for those who could use it as a stimulating and lucid companion to the Vulgate but for later scholars who made vernacular versions. It was printed with English translations at least four times between 1538 and 1550: three times with Tyndale’s version, once with Coverdale’s (STC 2815, 2816, 2819; which English translation accompanied STC 2821 I do not know).

- 20 Literally ‘heretic and a half’ (*sesquihaereticum*)
- 21 Erasmus hoped, as he often wrote, that the Scriptures would be read – in the vernacular tongues, necessarily – by all sorts and conditions of people, even by prostitutes and pimps. See the longer preface to his Paraphrase on Matthew LB VII **2 verso, and cf *Paraclesis* LB VI *3 verso / Holborn 142:10–19.
- 22 See n19 above. For other examples of hostile reaction to his New Testament see the amusing stories in ‘Cyclops’ (868:38–869:11) where, as in ‘The Sermon,’ the offenders are Franciscans. Here Erasmus pays off some old scores by implying that his mendicant critics – the ‘reverend gentlemen’ – are merely hypocrites.
- 23 *Adagia* I iv 89
- 24 A similar remark about a saint occurs in ‘The Shipwreck’ 356:5.
- 25 Eph 5:5, Heb 13:4
- 26 Erasmus had translated a speech by Lucian on this theme; *Abdicatus* LB I 197A–205A / ASD I-1 399–409.
- 27 Cf 1 Cor 7:9.
- 28 Paul’s solution in 1 Cor 7:9, and the remedy that Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, and many other reformers emphatically approved. For Erasmus’ views see *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 615A–724B, *De vidua christiana* LB v 723C–766E / CWE 66 184–257, and the colloquies in which marriage is discussed (‘Courtship,’ ‘The Girl with No Interest in Marriage,’ ‘The Repentant Girl,’ ‘Coniugium’).
- 29 He does not tell why he had been in Rome, but it is permissible to infer that remorse over his sinfulness had something to do with it, and that he went there on pilgrimage.
- 30 The cleansing of which was a feat of Hercules; *Adagia* II iv 21
- 31 Ps 51 (50 Vulg), one of the seven penitential psalms
- 32 *carolinum*; of uncertain value but clearly intended as a modest sum
- 33 This confessor is an exemplary Erasmian in his conception of penance and in his sensible and charitable treatment of the sinner. See ‘Youth’ 96:31–97:35 and the notes on those lines; *Exomologesis* (1524) LB v 145A–170D. Is the confessor’s advice excessively generous? Lea thought so: ‘This doubtless conveys the ideal of Erasmus, but it has the drawback of suggesting that the whole penitentiary system is superfluous’ (H.C. Lea *A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church* 3 vols [Philadelphia 1896] II 190n).
- 34 In canon law the dowry (*dos*) was the payment of money or property required of a woman entering a convent. Here the term means the marriage portion a bride brings to her husband. Lucretia will need this if she is ever to make a proper marriage; Sophronius offers to provide part of it. The expense of dowries was thought to be a cause of prostitution in Rome, where prostitutes

were numerous (Partner *Renaissance Rome* [n1 above] 98–9). In his final will (12 February 1536) Erasmus left an unspecified sum to assist girls to marry (Allen x1 365:46–8 Appendix 25). Similarly his first will (1527) left money to help place respectable young women who were in need (Allen v1 506:117–18 Appendix 19). Thomas Cromwell's will (1529) bequeathed forty pounds to such women (A.G. Dickens *Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation* [London 1959] 31). Guilds sometimes gave dowries to girls to enable them to marry or enter religious communities (*Original Ordinances of Early English Gilds* ed Lucy Toulmin Smith EETS original series 40 [London 1870] 194, 340).

- 35 And that is that: once the business is settled, Sophronius (or rather Erasmus) knows when to stop, thus avoiding more preaching when it is no longer needed and avoiding also the risk of that sentimentalism with which plots of this kind are often enveloped.

THE POETIC FEAST

Convivium poeticum

First printed in the August 1523 edition.

'In "The Poetic Feast," Erasmus asserts, 'I show what sort of feast scholars should have: frugal but gay and mirthful; seasoned with learned stories; without quarrels, bickering, or slander' ('The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1102:30–2). The feast provides few stories; the fare at this informal gathering is instead a pot-pourri of exegesis and textual criticism. Erasmus follows the classical precedents of Athenaeus and Aulus Gellius, whose *Deipnosophistae* and *Noctes Atticae* respectively offer learned notes or miniature essays on a wide variety of lexical and antiquarian topics. He is indebted likewise to the *Quaestiones convivales* in Plutarch's *Moralia*. Diversions of this kind, popular with Renaissance scholars, were the lighter side of that highly prized philological erudition which constituted scholarship. Another diversion, likewise esteemed in Erasmus' day and illustrated in 'The Poetic Feast' and later in 'The Epithalamium of Pieter Gillis,' was that of capping verses. For other lexical entertainments see 'The Profane Feast,' 'Echo,' 'A Meeting of the Philological Society,' 'The Imposture,' and 'The Sermon.'

Whether this literary party ever took place we cannot say, but we may suppose it resembles, more or less, many a one Erasmus enjoyed. On the identity of the guests see n1. As dramatic dialogue this symposium seems at times in danger of sinking beneath the weight of its own learning, but it has one refreshing character, at least, who rescues it from pedantry. This is Margaret, the housekeeper, a virago well worth notice by those interested in the ancestry of comic characters in Elizabethan dramatic literature. She is based on Margarete Büsslin, first heard of as Erasmus' servant in the summer of 1523 (Allen Ep 1371:18 / CWE Ep 1371:21), near the time when this colloquy was written. She remained with him for twelve years, much as he regretted the fact at times; but he seems to have found it easier to put up with her sharp tongue and sharp ways than to get rid of her. 'My Xanthippe,' he calls her, and sums her up as 'furax, rapax, bibax, mendax, loquax' and 'vetula deformis, pigra, loquax, edax, maledica' (Allen Epp 2202:41, 2735:50, 2897:25). In September 1535, after his move from Freiburg to Basel, he finally paid her off (Allen Epp 3054:13n, 3059:1–4). See Margaret Mann Phillips 'The Xanthippe of Desiderius Erasmus' *Moreana* 17 nos 65–8, *Thomas More Gazette* 2 (1980) 51–2.

There is a good edition of this colloquy, with translation and notes, by V.-L. Saulnier (Melun 1948). I am indebted also to Professor Philip Lockhart for help with some problems of metrics in this text.

HILARY, LEONARD, CRATO, GUESTS, MARGARET, CARINUS,
EUBULUS, SBRULIUS PARTHENIUS,¹ MOUSE (servant to Hilary)²

Hilary *A meagre fare but richest welcome here for you.*

5 **Leonard** *This supper party you've begun with direful note.*

Hilary *The gods above forbid! But wherefore think you so?*

Leonard *Because bloodthirsty iambs ill become a feast.*³

Crato Bravo! Surely the Muses are present: verses flow unprompted.

Hilary *Whirling trochees too are ready, if you think you'd like them best;*

10 *Modest fare is here provided, but the welcome's rich indeed.*⁴

Yet iambs too, created of old for contention and conflict, learned later to accommodate themselves to every theme. – My mellow friends, here you've melons⁵ grown in our own garden.⁶ Look: dwarf lettuce,⁷ with the tenderest flavour, corresponding to its name.⁸ What sensible man would not prefer

15 these delicacies to boars, morays,⁹ and woodcocks?

Crato If one's allowed to speak the plain truth at a poetic feast, what you call lettuce are beet greens.

Hilary Heaven forbid!

20 **Crato** It's a fact: look at their shape. And where's the milky flavour? Where the tender tips?

Hilary You rouse my suspicions. Ho there: send for the maid. Margaret, you Fury, what came into your head to serve us beet greens for lettuce?

Margaret I did it on purpose.

Hilary What are you talking about, you witch?

25 **Margaret** I wanted to find out whether, among so many poets, there was one who could tell lettuce from beet greens, for I know *you* can't. Honest now, who noticed they were beets?

Guests Crato.

Margaret I could easily guess *he* was no poet!

30 **Hilary** If you contrive anything else like this hereafter, I'll call you Blitea¹⁰ instead of Margaret.

Guests Ha, ha!

Margaret Calling me names won't make or mar me. (Often he changes my name twenty times a day. When he wants to coax something from me, he calls me Galatea, Euterpe, Calliope, Callirhoe, Melissa, Venus, Minerva,¹¹ and I don't know what. When he's out of sorts, suddenly I turn into Tisiphone, Megara, Alecto, Medusa, Baucis,¹² or whatever else his mad humour¹³ fancies.)

Hilary Off with you and your beets, Blitea!

40 **Margaret** What did you summon me here for?

Hilary To send you back where you came from.

Margaret There's an old saying, 'It's easier to call up the devil¹⁴ than to get rid of him.'¹⁵

Guests Ha, ha! A good hit. As the matter stands, Hilary, you need a magic charm to get rid of her.

5 **Hilary** I've one ready:

*Away with you, beetles; a savage wolf pursues you.*¹⁶

Margaret What's that you say, Aesop?¹⁷

10 **Crato** Careful, Hilary – you'll feel her fists. So you've exorcized her with your Greek spell! A fine magician!

Hilary What do you suppose this creature is, Crato? With a spell like that, I'd have exorcized ten big devils.

Margaret I don't care a damn¹⁸ for your Greekish verses.

15 **Hilary** Then it will take a magic boom,¹⁹ I see, or – if this won't do the trick – Mercury's magic wand.²⁰

Crato My dear Margaret, you know poets are an inspired – I don't dare say frenzied – tribe.²¹ I beg you to postpone this bickering until some other time and behave politely to us, for my sake, at this supper party.

20 **Margaret** What do I care for his snatches of verse? Time and again when I go to the butcher's he hasn't a penny – yet he recites bits of verse!

Crato Poets are like that. But come on; do what I say, please.

Margaret Well, for your sake I'll do it, since I know you're an honest man who's never beaten his brains over this sort of nonsense – but I wonder how
25 in the world you fell in with this crew.

Crato How can you tell what I'm like?

Margaret Because you've a big nose, bright eyes, and a nice, plump figure. Now just consider *his* nose and his sardonic²² laugh.

Crato But do oblige me, my sweet, by getting over your ill humour.

30 **Margaret** I'm leaving – I don't ask any of the others to thank me for it.

Hilary Is she really gone?

Margaret Not so far that she can't hear you.

Mouse She's in the kitchen now, muttering something or other to
35 herself.

Crato You've a maid who's anything but deaf and dumb.

Hilary They say a good maidservant should be endowed with three qualities: she should be trustworthy, ugly, and fierce – what's commonly called 'a dreadful woman.' A trustworthy one doesn't steal your substance;
40 an ugly one isn't sought by suitors; a dreadful one looks readily after her master's interest, for sometimes that must be done with hands as well as

tongue. This servant of mine has two of the three virtues: she's ugly and dreadful both. As to her honesty, I have my doubts.

Crato We've heard her tongue, but I for one was afraid for you at her hands.

Hilary Help yourselves to the melons. (We're through with the lettuce, because if I ordered that to be served now, I know well enough she'd serve cardoons.) There are small melons, too, if anyone prefers them.²³ – Look: fresh figs, just picked from the tree, as the milky juice in the stalk proves. Usually one drinks water after eating figs, to avoid indigestion. Here you've fresh cold water from the clearest little spring; it's useful for diluting the wine, too.

Crato But I don't know which to dilute with which, wine with water or water with wine, for indeed this wine seems to have been drawn from that same fount of the Muses.

Hilary Such wine helps to sharpen poets' wits. You crass fellows are fond of thick wines.

Crato I wish I were that lucky Crassus!²⁴

Hilary As for me, I'd rather be Codrus²⁵ or Ennius.²⁶ – Now, since I happen to have so many guests, and such remarkably erudite ones, I shan't let them go without learning something from them first. In the prologue to *Eunuchus* there is a passage that troubles many readers.²⁷ Most manuscripts have:

*sic existimet, sciat,
Responsum, non dictum esse, quia laesit prior,²⁸
Qui bene vertendo, et eas describendo male, etc.*

Let him²⁹ think thus, let him know, it's a reply, not a reproach, because he was the first to offend: translating well and writing them ill, etc.

In these words I miss a clear sense and one worthy of Terence.³⁰ For the translator wasn't 'first to offend' because he translated Greek plays badly but because he had carped at Terence's.

Eubulus 'Let the worst sing first,' as the common saying goes.³¹ When I was in London, at Thomas Linacre's,³² a man so learned in every branch of knowledge that he qualifies as an expert on these fine points of philology, he showed me an exceptionally old manuscript³³ in which the passage read:

*sic existimet, sciat,
Responsum, non dictum esse quale sit prius³⁴
Qui bene vertendo et eas describendo³⁵ male
Ex Graecis bonis Latinas fecit non bonas.
Idem Menandri Phasma nunc nuper dedit.³⁶*

Let him think, let him realize that this is a response, not a reproach; for instance [*quale sit*] the man³⁷ who earlier, by translating well and writing ill, made bad Latin plays out of good Greek ones has now lately given us the *Spectre* of Menander.³⁸

- 5 Now the speech is to be so construed that 'what sort it is' [*quale sit*] introduces a subjoined illustration of the preceding statement.³⁹ Terence was threatening to attack in his turn something in the plays of the man by whom he had been attacked, and he insists that this is not to be taken as a denunciation but as
 10 a reply [*responsum*]. One who provokes [*laccellit*] launches an attack [*dictum*]; one who retorts when provoked 'replies' [*respondet*]. 'What sort it is' [*quale sit*] – οἷον in Greek, *quod genus* [what kind], *veluti* [as], *videlicet* [namely], or *puta* [for instance] in Latin – promises an example of this point. Then he adds the rebuke, in which the adverb 'first' [*prius*] corresponds to the second
 15 adverb used in contrast with it – 'lately' [*nuper*], just as the pronoun 'who' [*qui*] corresponds to the word 'same' [*idem*]. The old plays of Lavinius he damns in toto, since the public had forgotten them. In the ones recently published by Lavinius he condemns certain passages.

- This, in my opinion, is the authentic reading and the true sense of the
 20 comic poet, unless Senate and Poetical Public⁴⁰ disagree.

Guests Oh, no; we're all on your side.⁴¹

Eubulus But I in my turn would like to learn something quite easy and simple from you – how to scan this bit of verse:

- 25 *Ex Graecis bonis Latinas fecit non bonas.*

Count it on your fingers.⁴²

Hilary I think that, by the practice of the ancients,⁴³ *s* is elided,⁴⁴ so that in the second foot there's an anapaest.⁴⁵

- 30 **Eubulus** I'd agree, were it not for the ablative ending *-is*, long by nature. So even when the consonant [*s*] is removed, the vowel is still long.

Hilary You're right.

- Crato** If some untutored ignoramus stepped in here, he'd certainly think that with this flashing of fingers among ourselves we were reviving a rustic
 35 game.⁴⁶

Leonard So far as I can see, we're wasting our time counting with fingers. Come to the rescue, if you can.

Eubulus See how a trifle sometimes torments men, even scholars. The preposition *ex* belong to the conclusion of the preceding line:

- 40 *Qui bene vertendo, et eas describendo male; ex*⁴⁷
Graecis bonis Latinas fecit non bonas.

Hence there's no difficulty.

Leonard That's so, by the Muses!

Carinus Since we've begun to count on our fingers, I'd like someone to scan this verse from *Andria* for me.⁴⁸

5

Sine invidia laudem invenias et amicos pares.

You would win a good name without envy and make friends.

10 I've tried it repeatedly and failed.

Leonard *Sine in* is an iamb; *-vidia*, an anapaest; *laudem in*, a spondee; *-venias*, an anapaest; *et ami-*, anapaest again.

Carinus You've five feet already⁴⁹ and there are three syllables left over. The first of them is long,⁵⁰ so you can't make either an iamb or a tribrach.

15 **Leonard** You're quite right. We're stuck. Who'll rescue us?

Eubulus Nobody can do so better than the one who got us into this fix.⁵¹ Come on, Carinus; if you've anything to tell your friends, don't hide it.

Carinus Unless my memory deceives me, I think I've read something relevant in Priscian,⁵² who informs us that in the Latin comic poets consonant⁵³ *u* [*v*] elides, just as vowel *u* does – often in the word *enimvero*, for instance; so that *enie* makes an anapaest.

Leonard Scan it for us, then.

Carinus I will. *Sine invidi* is a proceleusmatic,⁵⁴ unless you prefer that the *i* be elided by syneresis,⁵⁵ as when Virgil puts *aureo* for *auro* at the end of a heroic verse.⁵⁶ If you accept this,⁵⁷ there will be⁵⁸ a tribrach⁵⁹ first; *a lau-* is a spondee; *d'inveni*, a dactyl; *as et a-*, a dactyl; *micos*, a spondee; *pares*, an iamb.

Sbrulius Carinus has got us out of the difficulty, surely. But in the very same scene is a passage which, for all I know, has gone unnoticed.⁶⁰

30 **Hilary** Let's have it, please.

Sbrulius Simo speaks there in this fashion:

Sine ut eveniat, quod volo,

In Pamphilo ut nihil sit morae, restat Chremes.

35

Grant that it may turn out as I hope and Pamphilus makes no objection, still there's Chremes.

Hilary What bothers you here?

40 **Sbrulius** Although *sine* [grant] is the language of one who threatens, nothing that follows has any connection with threats. Therefore I suspect the poet wrote:

*Sin eveniat*⁶¹ *quod volo*

But if it turns out as I hope.

5 *Sin* corresponds to the *Si* preceding:

*Si propter amorem uxorem nolit ducere*⁶²

If, because of this love affair, he refuses to marry,

10

for the old man makes two contrary proposals. 'If, because of his passion for Glycerium, Pamphilus refuses to marry, I'll have grounds for complaint; if he doesn't refuse, then it remains for me to persuade Chremes.' But Sosia's interruption and Simo's indignation with Davus made a somewhat long

15 hyperbaton.⁶³

Hilary Mouse, bring me the book.⁶⁴

Crato You trust a mouse with a book?

Hilary More safely than with wine – Damned if Sbrulius isn't right.

20 **Parthenius** Hand me the book, so I can show you another crux. In the prologue of *Eunuchus* here's a verse that doesn't fit:⁶⁵

Habeo alia multa, quae nunc condonabuntur.

I've many others, which will be overlooked for the present.

25

Although the Latin comic writers take many liberties in this kind of verse, still I don't recall any other instance of their ending a senarius⁶⁶ with a spondee;⁶⁷ unless perhaps it ought to be read *condonabitur*, impersonally,⁶⁸ or *condonabimus*, with the number of the person changed.

30 **Margaret**⁶⁹ That's poets for you! The minute dinner starts, they count on their fingers⁷⁰ and bring out a book. Better save games and literature for the second course.

Crato Not bad at all, this advice of Margaret's – we'll take it. We'll resume the fun after our appetites are satisfied. Meanwhile let's play fingers in the dish.

35 **Hilary** Note the extravagance of poets: you've three kinds of eggs, boiled, roasted, and fried; all quite fresh, laid within the past two days.

Parthenius I for one can't stand the taste of butter. If they're fried in oil⁷¹ they'll be most acceptable.

Hilary Off, boy; find out from Margaret which they're fried in.

40

Mouse Neither one, she says.

Hilary Neither butter nor oil? In what, then?

Mouse In lye, according to her.

Crato Just the answer such a question deserves. What's hard about telling butter from oil?

5 **Carinus** Especially for those who so easily distinguish lettuce from beet greens!

Hilary Here's an ovation⁷² for you, to be followed after a while by a triumph. – Look about you, boy. Don't you notice something missing?

Mouse A lot of things.

10 **Hilary** These eggs lack seasoning to make them palatable.

Mouse What do you want?

Hilary Tell her to send us the verjuice⁷³ made from green grapes.

Mouse I'll tell her.

15 **Hilary** What, you're back empty-handed?

Mouse She says you don't squeeze juice from nails.⁷⁴

Leonard⁷⁵ That servant!

Sbrulius At least we'll season our eggs with stories. In Horace's *Epodes* I came across a passage, not corrupt as far as the text is concerned but
20 misinterpreted, not only by Mancinellus⁷⁶ and other modern commentators but even by Porphyrio⁷⁷ himself. It's in the poem where he sings a palinode to the witch Canidia:⁷⁸

25 *Tuusque venter Pactumeius, et tuo
Cruore rubros obstetrix pannos lavit
Utcunque fortis exilis puerpera.*

Pactumeius is your child and yours the blood
That soiled the cloths which then the midwife washed,
30 However strong from childbed you leap forth.

They⁷⁹ all take *exilis* here to be an adjective,⁸⁰ when in fact it's a verb. I might cite Porphyrio, if indeed the opinion is really his: 'Now *exilis*,' he says, 'is used as though to suggest she is ugly from childbearing; by gauntness
35 [*exilitatem*] of body he means natural emaciation.'⁸¹ A disgraceful blunder if so eminent a man failed to perceive that metrics forbids this interpretation; because the fourth position doesn't allow a spondee.⁸² Actually the poet says jokingly⁸³ that she had truly given birth, though she had not had a long confinement but jumped⁸⁴ out of bed at once, as some hardy lying-in women
40 generally do.

Hilary Our thanks, Sbrulius, for seasoning our eggs so elegantly.

Leonard In the first book of the *Odes* is an instance of the same kind; it's at the beginning of *Tu ne quaesieris*.⁸⁵ The received text is this:

neu Babylonios

5 *Tentaris numeros, ut melius quicquid erit pati.*

Nor Babylonian

Tables consult; better far to bear what haps.

10 Ancient commentators skip this passage as though it presented no difficulty. Mancinellus alone, noticing that the expression is incomplete, bids us add *possis* [be able to].⁸⁶

Sbrulius Have you anything more precise on this point?

Leonard I'm not clear about it, but I think Horace has transposed a Greek
15 idiom; none of the poets does so more freely or more frequently. In Greek it's common to add an infinitive to the conjunctions ὥς and ὥστε. Thus Horace, *ut pati* for *ut patiaris* [that you may bear]. However, the conjecture of Mancinellus is not altogether nonsense.

Hilary I'm delighted by your remarks. – Mouse,⁸⁷ off with you and bring
20 whatever else there is.

Crato What new delicacies have we here?

Hilary This is sliced cucumber; this a sauce made of the insides of a gourd. It's good as a purge.

25 **Sbrulius** A medicinal meal, truly.

Hilary Take it in good part. Presently we'll have a hen from our own coop.

Sbrulius We'll change your name from Hilary to Apicius.⁸⁸

Hilary Well, laugh as much as you like; tomorrow you may praise this feast in earnest.

30 **Sbrulius** How so?

Hilary When you find your lunch well seasoned.

Sbrulius With hunger?⁸⁹

Hilary Exactly.

Crato Hilary, know what I'd like you to take as your province?

35 **Hilary** I'll know if you tell me.

Crato⁹⁰ The choir sings certain hymns that are not ignorantly written but have been corrupted in many places by ignorant men. I'd like your help in restoring the texts. For example, we sing:⁹¹

40 *Hostis Herodes impie,
 Christum venire quid times?*

Thou wicked Herod, cruel foe,
Why dost thou fear, now Christ is come?

One word's being out of place here has made the line doubly defective.

- 5 For *hostis*, which makes a trochee, doesn't belong in an iambic poem; and *Hero-*, a spondee, can't be in the second position. Undoubtedly the verse was originally written:

Herodes hostis impie.

10

The epithet *impie* fits *hostis* better than *Herodes*. Moreover, since *Herodes* is a Greek form, *η* is changed to *ε* in the vocative, as *Σωκράτης*, ὦ *Σώκρατες*; and in *Ἀγάμεμνον*, the *ω* of the nominative is changed to *ο*.⁹²

Again, we sing a hymn thus:⁹³

15

*Iesu corona virginum,
Quem mater illa concepit,
Quae sola virgo parturit.*

20

O Jesus, crown of virgins thou,
Whom she conceived whose glory was
To be both mother and pure maid.

Undoubtedly we should read *concepit*,⁹⁴ since change of tense does add grace to the style. And it's absurd to object to *concepit* when *parturit* follows.⁹⁵

25

Hilary I've run into a good many examples of this sort myself, and I shan't mind devoting a few days' work to the subject sometime. – Ambrose, I should say, achieves no slight beauty in this song. Usually he ends the dimeter with a trisyllabic word and makes the caesura coincide with the end of a word; this occurs too often with him to seem accidental. If you want an example, *Deus creator*,⁹⁶ a penthemimer,⁹⁷ is accompanied by *omnium*; *polique rector* by *vestiens*; *diem decoro* by *lumine*; *noctem soporis* by *gratia*.

30

But here's a fat hen that has laid eggs and hatched chicks for me ten whole years.

35

Crato She didn't deserve a death sentence!

Carinus If more serious topics are in order, I've something to submit.

Hilary All right, if it's not too serious.

Carinus It's not. I started to read Seneca's letters⁹⁸ recently and foundered in the very harbour, as they say.⁹⁹ The passage is in the first letter: 'And if you consider the matter,' he says, 'a large part of life slips away while people are doing ill; the largest part of it while they are doing nothing; the whole

40

of it while they are doing something irrelevant.¹⁰⁰ In this dictum he strains after some subtlety; it's beyond me.

Leonard I'll clear it up if you wish.

Carinus Of course.

- 5 **Leonard** No one does wrong all the time. And yet, through excess, lust, grasping ambition, and other vices a great part of life is wasted. But a much larger portion of life is lost to those who do nothing at all. Moreover, those who are said to 'do nothing' aren't those who live idly but those who busy themselves in frivolities that contribute nothing to happiness.
- 10 Hence the proverb, 'Better to leave off than to "do nothing."'¹⁰¹ But the whole of life is lost to those who 'are doing something irrelevant.' He is said to 'do something irrelevant' who pays no attention to what he's doing. So the whole of life is lost, for while we spend our time in vice we 'do something irrelevant'; while we spend our time in frivolities we 'do
- 15 something irrelevant'; while we study philosophy – since we do it lazily and carelessly – we 'do something irrelevant' and are inattentive, as though the thing didn't matter.

If this interpretation fails to please, let Seneca's maxim be added to those that Aulus Gellius condemns in this author as useless quibbles.¹⁰²

- 20 **Hilary** It pleases me well enough. (But fall to work on the hen. I don't want to mislead you; there's nothing else coming.) It agrees with what precedes: 'Loss which is due to negligence is the most disgraceful.'¹⁰³ He declares this, furthermore, in the three-part sentence above. But I think I notice a corruption a little later: 'We do not see death ahead of us. The major part of
- 25 it has already overtaken us.'¹⁰⁴ This, I believe, should read: 'We see death ahead of us.' For we 'see ahead of us' what is distant, though in fact death has for the most part already overtaken us.

- Leonard**¹⁰⁵ If philosophers sometimes take a holiday in the meadows of the Muses, it will not seem absurd, perhaps, for us to indulge our whims and do
- 30 the same in their domain now and then.

Hilary Of course not.

- Leonard** In rereading, lately, Aristotle's book *On Refutations*,¹⁰⁶ a subject rhetoricians share in large part with philosophers, I found egregious errors made by the translators.¹⁰⁷ There can be no doubt that persons
- 35 ignorant of Greek have gone wildly astray in many places here. Aristotle discusses the kind of ambiguity arising when the same word has different senses.¹⁰⁸

- 40 ὅτι μαθάνουσιν οἱ ἐπιστάμενοι· τὰ γὰρ ἀποστοματιζόμενα μαθάνουσιν οἱ γραμματικοί· τὸ γὰρ μαθάνειν ὁμώνυμον, τό τε ξυνιέναι χρώμενον τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ, καὶ τὸ λαμβάνειν τὴν ἐπιστήμην.

... those who know, grasp things [μανθάνουσιν]. For those who know their letters grasp [μανθάνουσιν] what is dictated. For μανθάνειν is equivocal, meaning 'to understand by using knowledge' and 'to get knowledge.'

5 They translate thus:¹⁰⁹

Quoniam discunt scientes. Nam secundum os grammatici discunt; discere enim aequivocum, ad intelligere eum qui utitur disciplina et accipere disciplinam.

10 Those who know, learn [*discunt*]. For scholars learn by mouth. For *discere* is equivocal, meaning 'to understand' – referring to one who uses knowledge – and 'to receive knowledge.'¹¹⁰

Hilary Now you seem to be talking Hebrew, not Latin!

15 **Leonard** Any of you detect an ambiguous expression here?

Hilary None.

Leonard Then what's more foolish than to want to translate the untranslatable?¹¹¹ For although μανθάνειν in Greek means both 'to learn' and 'to teach,' *disco* in Latin does not similarly mean both 'to give
20 instruction' [*doctrinam*]¹¹² and 'to receive instruction.' (I do not know,¹¹³ however, if this is correct. I rather think that μανθάνειν is ambiguous in Greek as *cognoscere* is in Latin. For one can use *cognoscere* of one who 'understands' and of a judge who 'investigates' a case. So I think that in Greek μανθάνειν [to understand, to learn] can be used of the
25 teacher who asks the boys to reproduce what he dictates and also of the boys who receive the dictation.) How gracefully (!) translated is τὰ γὰρ ἀποστοματιζόμενα μανθάνουσιν οἱ γραμματικοί by *Nam secundum os grammatici discunt*,¹¹⁴ when it should have been rendered *Nam grammatici quae dictant docent* [For experts in letters teach what they dictate].¹¹⁵ Here
30 the commentator should have substituted another example to illustrate the same point, but not in these same words. In this passage, however, I suspect the Greek text is corrupt and should be written ὁμώνυμον, τῷ τε συνιέναι καὶ τῷ λαμβάνειν [equivocal, meaning 'to understand' and 'to receive'].

35 A little later he gives another example of ambiguity, arising not from different meanings of the same word but from different word orders: τὸ βούλεσθαι λαβεῖν με τοὺς πολεμίους [to wish me the enemy to capture].¹¹⁶ This is rendered *velle me accipere pugnantes* [to wish me to receive the combatants],¹¹⁷ instead of *velle me capere hostes* [to wish me the enemy to
40 capture]. And, if you read βούλεσθε 'you wish,' the expression is more clear: 'You wish me to capture the enemy.' The pronoun can precede the verb *capere*

[to take] and follow it. If it precedes, the sense will be: 'Do you wish me to capture the enemy?' [*Vultis ut ego capiam hostes?*]. If it follows, 'Do you wish the enemy to capture me?' [*Vultis ut hostes me capiant?*].

He adds another example of this kind: ἄρ' ὃ τις γινώσκει, τοῦτο γινώσκει; that is, 'When one knows something, this one knows.'¹¹⁸ The ambiguity lies in τοῦτο [this]. If that is taken as an accusative, the sense will be, 'Whatever a person knows, this is known to him'; if as a nominative, the sense will be, 'The thing that a person knows, knows,' as if it could not be known unless it in turn knows.

Again, he adds another: ἄρα ὃ τις ὁρᾷ, τοῦτο ὁρᾷ· ὁρᾷ δὲ τὸν κίονα. ὥστε ὁρᾷ ὁ κίων [If a person sees a thing, this a person sees. But a person a column sees; therefore a column sees].¹¹⁹ Again the ambiguity lies in τοῦτο [this], as we've shown before. Still, this can be rendered somehow or other for Latin ears. What follows is untranslatable: ἄρα ὃ σὺ φῆς εἶναι, τοῦτο σὺ φῆς εἶναι· φῆς δὲ λίθον εἶναι· σὺ ἄρα φῆς λίθος εἶναι [What you claim to be, this you claim to be. You claim a stone to be; therefore you claim to be a stone].¹²⁰ Which they render thus: *Putas quod tu dicis esse, hoc tu dicis esse. Dicis autem lapidem esse; tu ergo lapis dicis esse* [You think that what you claim to be, this you claim to be. You claim a stone to be; therefore you claim to be a stone].¹²¹ I ask you, what human sense can be made of these words? The ambiguity depends partly on a Greek idiom in the major and minor premises; though in the major there's another ambiguity also – in the two words ὃ and τοῦτο.¹²² If these are taken as nominative the sense will be: 'Whatever you say you are, that you are'; if accusative, 'Whatever thing you say is, you say that is'; and it is in this sense that λίθον φῆς εἶναι [you claim the stone to be] is taken. But it is to the first sense that σὺ ἄρα φῆς λίθος εἶναι [therefore you claim to be a stone] refers. Catullus once ventured to imitate this peculiarity of Greek idiom:¹²³

30 *Phaselus iste quem videtis, hospites,
Ait fuisse navium celerrimus.*

This yacht you see before you, gentlemen,
Was once, it says, the fastest ship afloat.

35 Such¹²⁴ was the received text in the older editions. Ignorant of this fact, the commentators on these points inevitably made all sorts of absurd blunders.

What immediately follows in Aristotle can scarcely come clear in Latin. Καὶ ἄρ' ἔστι σιγῶντα λέγειν; διττὸν γὰρ ἔστι, τὸ σιγῶντα λέγειν· τὸ τε τὸν λέγοντα σιγᾶν, καὶ τὸ τὰ λεγόμενα [Is speaking of the silent possible? 'Speaking of the silent' can have two meanings: that the speaker keeps silence and that what he speaks of are silent].¹²⁵ This they've rendered as

follows: *Et putas, est tacentem dicere? Duplex enim est tacentem dicere; et hunc dicere tacentem*¹²⁶ *et quae dicuntur* [And do you suppose it is possible to speak while being silent? 'To speak while silent' can have two meanings: that a silent person speaks and also to speak the things that are said]. Isn't this more obscure than the Sibylline leaves?¹²⁷

Hilary The Greek itself isn't clear to me.

Leonard I'll explain it as well as I can. 'Is speaking of the silent possible?' This question has a double meaning: one of them is false and absurd; the other can be true. It's impossible that one who speaks doesn't say what he speaks, that is, keeps silent while speaking. But it *is* possible for one who speaks to keep silent about who speaks. (This example, however, verges on another formula added a little later.)

Furthermore, I'm astonished that next, with regard to the type of ambiguity arising from the conjunction of many words, the Greek text has changed 'age' into 'letters': ἐπίστασθαι τὰ γράμματα [to know letters], although the Latin manuscripts have *scire saeculum* [to know the age]. Here a double meaning results: that the age itself knows something or that someone knows the age. But this passage works better with αἰῶνα [age] or κόσμον [world] than with γράμματα [letters], for to say 'letters know something' is absurd, whereas to say something is 'known to our age' or someone 'knows his own times' is not absurd.¹²⁸

Now somewhat later, where he gives an illustration of ambiguity arising from accent, the translator has not hesitated to substitute Virgilian for Homeric expressions,¹²⁹ though those were just as necessary in the earlier example ('Whatever you claim to be, is').¹³⁰ Aristotle refers to Homer: οὐ καταπύθεται ὄμβρω [part of which is rotted by the rain].¹³¹ If οὐ is aspirated and given a circumflex, the meaning is 'part of which is rotted by the rain'; if it has smooth breathing and acute accent, οὔ, 'it is not rotted by the rain.' (This is taken from *Iliad* ψ.) Another example is: διδόμεν δέ οἱ εὖχος ἀρέσθαι [allow him to win glory]. With the penult accented [διδόμεν], the meaning is 'allow him'; if the first syllable is accented, δίδομεν, the meaning is 'we allow.' But the poet does not intend Jove to say 'we allow.' Jove bids the dream to grant the prayer of him to whom it is sent. διδόμεν is used for διδόναι.¹³² For these two Homeric verses they¹³³ have substituted others from our poets; such as this from the *Odes* of Horace:¹³⁴

*Me tuo longas pereunte noctes
Lydia dormis.*

All the night I languish from love while you,
Lydia, sleep sound.

If the accent is on *me*, a short syllable, and *tu* is unaccented, *metuo* is a single word, meaning 'I fear.' However, this ambiguity depends not only on accent but also on position. Another example they've taken from Virgil:¹³⁵

5 *Heu quia nam*¹³⁶ *tanti cinxerunt aethera nimbi.*

Ah, that clouds so huge have girded the heavens!

However, this ambiguity too depends on position.

10 **Hilary** These are subtleties indeed, and worth knowing, Leonard, but meanwhile I fear this feast may seem more sophisticated than poetical. Another time, if you like, we'll spend a whole day hunting fallacies in the *Fallacies*.

Leonard In other words, we'll look for wood in the forest¹³⁷ and water in the sea!¹³⁸

15 **Hilary** Where's my Mouse?

Mouse Present.

Hilary Tell Margaret to serve the dessert.

Mouse I'm off.

20 **Hilary** Back again empty-handed?

Mouse She swears she hadn't thought about dessert and says the session has lasted long enough.

Hilary I'm afraid that if we prolong this discussion she'll upset the table for us, as Xanthippe did for Socrates.¹³⁹ We'll do better, therefore, to take
25 dessert in the garden.¹⁴⁰ There we can stretch our legs and chat as we please; and while we're doing so, pick whatever fruit you like.

Guests A fine idea.

Hilary Here's a little fountain of water more delicious than any wine.

Carinus How is it that your garden is more splendid than your courtyard?

30 **Hilary** That's because I spend more time here. – If you see something you like, don't be sparing of our garden's riches.

Now, if you think you've strolled enough, suppose we sit down under this lime tree and invoke the Muses?¹⁴¹

Parthenius All right, so be it.

35 **Hilary** The very garden will furnish a subject.

Parthenius If you'll lead the way, we'll follow.¹⁴²

Hilary Well, I'll do so. 'That man's a fool whose garden blooms with countless delights when his mind is uncultivated by learning and virtue.'

Leonard If you'll turn that same sentence into verse, we'll believe the Muses
40 are present.

Hilary I'm much more apt to turn prose into verse than silver into gold.

Leonard Go ahead and say it.

Hilary *When one whose garden's brightness dazzles ev'rywhere
Will suffer his own mind, with weeds and tares o'ergrown,
To bring forth nothing lovely, he's a fool at last.*¹⁴³

- 5 There, you've a poem inspired neither by the Muses nor by Apollo!¹⁴⁴ But it will be nice if each of you turns this sentence into a different kind of verse.

Leonard What prize shall the winner have?

Hilary This basket filled with apples, plums, cherries, medlars, pears, or anything else he likes.

- 10 **Leonard** Who'll be umpire of the contest?

Hilary Crato, of course. And therefore he alone will be excused from competing, in order to concentrate on listening.

Crato I fear your judge will turn out to be like the one the cuckoo and the nightingale once had in their contest to decide the best singer.¹⁴⁵

- 15 **Hilary** Perfectly all right if everybody agrees.

Guests The umpire's acceptable. Begin, Leonard.

Leonard *He whose acres are always quick to yield him
Rich fruits, herbs, besides lovely blooming flowers,
Who though wealthy in land is poor in virtue,
Pays no heed to his soul but lets it grow wild,
Pleasing none because useless – that man I deem
Mere fool, barren, an idler, good for nothing.*¹⁴⁶

I've had my say.

Hilary Carinus bites his nails;¹⁴⁷ we look for something fancy.

- 25 **Carinus** The Muses have deserted me.

*He who delves and plants and waters, that his garden bloom so brightly,
But himself neglects entirely, fails to grow in learning's goodness,
He's a wastrel, fit for nothing; reaps the whirlwind by his folly.*¹⁴⁸

Hilary He didn't bite his nails for nothing!

- 30 **Eubulus** Since I'm next, here goes:

*Foolish and vain is the man who with labours incessant will toil so,
Trying to grow in his garden all manner of beautiful flowers,
Heedless of virtue's crop, careless and scornful of soul's growth.*¹⁴⁹

Hilary No need to prod Sbrulius, since he's so full of verses that they often
35 flow from him of their own accord.

Sbrulius *That man whose fair lawns dazzle with brightest hues
But who lets wisdom's seeds in his own soul die,
Has all his time and labour wasted:
Mind should come first, and the care that mind needs.*¹⁵⁰

- 40 **Parthenius** *Have no care for gardens and colours shining
If you pay no heed to the growth of soul's good;*

*First and best is health of the inward parts; all
Else should come second.*¹⁵¹

Hilary Now let's see to which of us the garden will furnish the most maxims.¹⁵²

- 5 **Leonard** What would so splendid a garden not do? This rose-bush, for example, will suggest to me what to say: 'As the rose's bloom is short, so is youth fleeting. Make haste to pluck the rose before it fades; strive the more, lest youth vanish and leave no flower behind.'¹⁵³

Hilary An excellent subject for a poem.

- 10 **Carinus** 'As among trees each has its own fruit, so among men each has his own gifts.'

Eubulus 'As the earth, if it is cultivated, brings forth various treasures for man's use, but when neglected is overgrown with thorns and briers, so man's character, if nurtured by good learning, produces many virtues; if left
15 untended, is possessed by every kind of vice.'

Sbrulius 'A garden must be tended daily to make it bloom; the mind, once formed by good learning, blooms and flowers forever.'

- Parthenius** 'As the charm of a garden does not distract the mind from good learning but invites it, rather, so should we devise games and jokes that are
20 not inappropriate to letters.'

Hilary Hurrah, I see a host of maxims! Now for verses; but before we proceed to that, it will be no unseemly or unprofitable exercise, in my judgment, if we turn our first maxim into Greek verses as often as we did the Latin. Leonard, here, will begin; he has long consorted with the Greek Muses.

- 25 **Leonard** I'll make a fool of myself if you say so.

Hilary I say so and I command so.

Leonard *The man whose garden far excels in loveliness,
But who himself can boast no ornaments of mind,
No elegance nor beauty of the soul within,
30 Is foolish: cultivate the more important first.*¹⁵⁴

I've led the dance; follow who will.

Hilary Carinus.

Carinus Oh, no – Hilary.

Leonard But I see Margaret coming with some delicacies or other.

- 35 **Hilary** If she does that, my poetic fury will fail me. – What do you bring?

Margaret Mustard, to season your dessert with. Aren't you ashamed to chatter here until the middle of the night? And then you poets prattle about women's talkativeness!

- Crato** That's not bad advice from Margaret. Time now for everyone to go to
40 his nest. On some other occasion we'll spend a whole day¹⁵⁵ at this attractive kind of contest.

Hilary But to whom do you award the prize?

Crato Well, to myself for the present. Nobody's won but me.

Hilary How did you win when you didn't compete?

Crato You've contended, but not to the finish. As for me, I did what none of
5 you could do: got the best of Margaret.

Carinus He's within his rights, Hilary. Let him carry off the basket.

NOTES

- 1 Hilary, the host, is named after Hilarius Bertholf, Erasmus' secretary at the time this colloquy was published; on him see 'Inns' n1. The names of the guests, as Smith first noted (*Key* 24), are borrowed from Erasmus' friends and acquaintances. We can be fairly certain of their identities, but whether their personal traits or interests are recorded or hinted at in the dialogue we can only guess. Leonard is probably Leonardus Priccardus, canon of Aachen (Allen Ep 972 introduction). Crato Stalburg, a young friend, lived with Erasmus in Basel a few months before the colloquy appeared (Allen Epp 1316:38n, 1673:18n, 1818:3n). His more memorable distinction was that the editor's preface to the first (unauthorized) edition of the *Colloquia*, November 1518, was addressed to him and his brother Nikolaus by Beatus Rhenanus. Carinus is Ludovicus Carinus of Lucerne, a member of Erasmus' household in 1522–3, though later there was a disagreement between them (Allen Ep 920 introduction). Eubulus, who recalls a conversation with Thomas Linacre in London, is Erasmus himself. Riccardo Sbruglio, an Italian who spent many years in German universities, was a productive if minor Latin poet, known to Erasmus since November 1520 (Allen Ep 1159 introduction). Parthenius is believed to be Tranquillus Andronicus Parthenius, who tried as many Italian universities as Sbruglio did German ones. Later he was in the service of Hungary and by 1543 secretary to King Ferdinand. Ep 991 is addressed to him. On all of these men see CEBR.
- 2 Mouse . . . Hilary] Added in the March 1524 edition
- 3 These four lines of verse are iambic senarii in the original. With 'bloodthirsty iambs' compare Horace's *criminosus* . . . *iambis* in *Odes* in 1.16.2–3. As Hilary explains in lines 11–12, iambic poetry, especially in Greek, was anciently identified or associated with scurrilous and satirical verse. An obscure Greek myth related that when Demeter, sister of Zeus and goddess of agriculture, was wandering in disguise seeking her daughter, a maiden named Iambe entertained her by reciting such verse.
- 4 These two lines are trochaic septenarii (catalectic). Erasmus borrowed 'whirling' (*rotatiles*, a rare word) from Prudentius *Epilogus* 8 (CSEL 61 448). He wrote commentaries on two hymns by Prudentius (LB V 1337C–1358C / CWE 29 171–218).
- 5 *O pepones*, *habetis pepones*; a pun dependent on metaphorical meanings of *pepones* as 'soft' or effeminate men and, in a better sense, 'kind' or 'sociable.' As Erasmus notes in *Adagia* IV i 81, both meanings are found in Homer, for example *Iliad* 2.235 and 9.252.

- 6 As in 'The Godly Feast'
- 7 A Roman favourite; Martial 3.47.8
- 8 *lactucas*, suggesting *lac* 'milk'
- 9 See 'The Profane Feast' n83 above.
- 10 Silly, stupid; see *Adagia* II iv 72. See also Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 135 n50. 'Margaret' means 'pearl.'
- 11 Flattering names, since they are those of goddesses (Venus, Minerva), Muses (Euterpe, Calliope), nymphs (Galatea, Melissa), and a princess (Callirhoe) in classical mythology and literature
- 12 Anti-heroines. Tisiphone, Megara, and Alecto were Furies, evil spirits who tormented human beings. Medusa was a hideous monster whose head turned whoever beheld it to stone. Finally Perseus, with the help of the gods, cut off her head. Baucis is familiar as the name of a good woman favoured by the gods, but here means merely a crone as in Persius 4.21.
- 13 Margaret scores a hit here because she is quoting a phrase from Horace *Satires* 2.3.141 – *splendida bilis* 'glittering bile,' a medical term – another proof that she does not live in a learned household for nothing. The phrase is from a passage in which Horace says that Orestes' *splendida bilis* had caused him to call his sister Electra a Fury, the very term Margaret's master has just directed to her – not for the first time, evidently.
- 14 *cacodaemonem*. Cf 'The Repentant Girl' n7.
- 15 Doubtless proverbial but not in *Adagia*. It appears in John Webster's *The White Devil* (1612) 5.1.88–90, perhaps borrowed from Erasmus, for elsewhere in the same play Webster is known to have borrowed a passage from 'The Funeral' (see n89 there). Although earlier versions than Erasmus' are not easy to find, the practical wisdom exemplified by the aphorism is universal. An ancient analogue was known to Erasmus in Lucian's *Philopseudes* (34–6), which was translated by More. It is the familiar tale of the Sorcerer's Apprentice.
- 16 This line, a Greek verse in the original, is quoted and received as a 'magic charm' or 'Greek spell.' It comes from the catalogue of medicinal plants and drugs in Pliny's *Naturalis historia* book 27. One brief passage (27.100) describes a remedy for impetigo or eczema. A person takes two stones from the mossy bank of a stream, spits on one, rubs it against the other, then applies the one smeared with spittle to the impetigo, saying as he does so 'Away with you, beetles; a savage wolf pursues you.' This utterance is undeniably obscure, for what have beetles to do with impetigo?
Two texts – neither of them mentioned here by Erasmus – throw some light on the matter. In the first place, an earlier passage in Pliny (18.152) says that a small beetle (*cantharis*) devours grain, but when all the grain is consumed the beetles disappear. Secondly there is a text, not found in Pliny, connecting *cantharides* with impetigo. The *Materia medica* of Dioscorides (first century AD) 2.66 in old editions but 2.61 in Max Wellmann's (3 vols, Berlin 1958) speaks of a kind of *cantharis* (Spanish fly) which, when roasted, was mixed with medicines useful in treating cancer, leprosy, and 'wild impetigo'; see John Goodyer's translation made c 1655 but not printed, *The Greek Herbal of Dioscorides* ed Robert T. Gunther (Oxford 1933; repr New York 1959) 106–7. Furthermore the

word translated 'savage' is ἄγριος, which also means 'wild' and in a medical sense 'malignant' or cancerous.

I suggest that the Greek verse in Pliny is a confused allusion to these two supposed facts about cantharides, that they eat crops and therefore must be frightened off by a charm or spell, and that if suitably cooked and added to other medicines they are useful in treating impetigo. The verse will do for Hilary's purpose, whether it is an unintelligible hodgepodge or not. As any stick is good to beat a dog with, any spell that comes to mind, sense or nonsense, may be good enough, Hilary thinks, if it works – that is, silences Margaret. But she is undaunted by 'Greekish verses.'

Erasmus' library contained three copies of Dioscorides (Husner nos 201–3).

One of them (Venice: Aldus Manutius 1499) survives in the Provinciale Bibliotheek von Friesland at Leeuwarden. See Martin Engels 'Erasmiana in the Old University Library of Franeker' *Erasmus in English* 12 (1983) 19.

- 17 'Aesop' because, like the fabulist, he resorts to a moralized tale about animal life. For Erasmus on fables, especially Aesop's, see *De copia* CWE 24 631–3.
- 18 *Adagia* I viii 4
- 19 magic boom] Authorized editions of the text, from the first (August 1523) to the last (March 1533) and beyond (*Opera omnia* 1538–40), read *bombus magicus*. LB I 721A unnecessarily emends *bombus* to *rhombus*.
- 20 The caduceus, a staff carried by Mercury as herald of the gods; *Adagia* II v 34
- 21 Cf Horace *Epistles* 2.2.102.
- 22 Mocking, scornful. The word – another one Margaret has acquired in this household – was said to be derived from the poisonous 'Sardonic' plant that grew in Sardinia. Whoever ate of it died miserably, his lips drawn in a ghastly grin. Erasmus gives a long account in *Adagia* III v 1.
- 23 Eusebius' garden in 'The Godly Feast' also produces large and small melons. See n11 there.
- 24 A laboured pun on *crassi* 'crass,' *crassis* 'thick,' and *Crassus*. The allusion is to Marcus Licinius Crassus Dives, 'Crassus the millionaire,' Roman financier and politician (c 112–53 BC). 'Richer than Crassus' was proverbial; *Adagia* I vi 74. See *De copia* CWE 24 391:5.
- 25 A wretched poet mentioned by Virgil in *Eclogues* 5.11 and 7.22
- 26 230–169 BC, revered as the father of Latin poetry. Tradition said that he was poor and lived a simple, frugal life (Cicero *De senectute* 5.14).
- 27 *Eunuchus* Prologue 5–9; the first three lines are dealt with here. Modern texts omit *sciat* in line 5 and read *easdem scribendo* in line 7 (lines 22, 24 here). The 1538 issue (Basel: Froben) of Erasmus' Terence and a 1534 Cologne edition (Johannes Prael) have *sciat*. The 1534 volume contains apposite passages from the *Adagia* as well as notes by other scholars, including Melanchthon and Cardinal Bembo. The Froben edition has commentary by ancient grammarians, including Donatus and Cornutus.
- 28 On *quia laesit prior* see n34 below.
- 29 Luscus Lanuvinus (or Lavinus, as he is named in certain manuscripts), a rival poet, who had accused Terence of plagiarism. Terence was equally critical of him.
- 30 Erasmus had a lifelong admiration for Terence. We are told by Beatus Rhenanus that he knew Terence and Horace by heart when he was a boy (Allen I 55:84–5;

- 70:540–1). Terence was still considered by many a prose writer, even by Erasmus himself in 1489 (Allen Ep 20:100–1 / CWE Ep 20:98–9). Like other Renaissance educators, Erasmus esteemed Cicero and Terence as supreme models of elegance and purity of diction (*De ratione studii* LB I 521D / CWE 24 669:9–10). He defended the suitability of Terence for schoolboys (Allen Ep 31:84 / CWE Ep 31:97; Allen Ep 2584:70–89, the preface to his 1532 edition of Terence). In *De ratione studii* he has an interesting passage on how a teacher may introduce a Terentian play to his students (CWE 24:682:11–683:25, 687:8–689:16). Luther, who is quoted as having said he read Terence every evening, declared that a single leaf of Terence is better than all the colloquies of Erasmus (WA *Tischreden* 4 and Clemen 8 no 5023, WA *Tischreden* 3 no 3039a).
- 31 Apparently proverbial but not in *Adagia*. ‘Always the worst goes foremost’ is an aphorism in Thomas Middleton and William Rowley’s comedy *The Old Law* (c 1616) 3.2.132, but no earlier example in English seems to be recorded. Last place was and is the most honourable in processions; see ‘The Funeral’ 773:20–1 and n79.
- 32 Thomas Linacre (c 1460–1524), eminent scholar and physician, a highly esteemed friend of Erasmus, More (whom he had taught Greek), and other humanists. He wrote important works on Latin grammar, promoted the study of Greek, translated writings by Galen, Proclus, and Aristotle into Latin, and was principal founder and first president of the Royal College of Physicians. Erasmus praises him in Allen Ep 118:23 / CWE Ep 118:26–7 and *Ciceronianus* LB I 1012E–F / ASD I-2 676:14–677:7 / CWE 28 423. See CEBR.
- 33 How old is unknown. Erasmus tells us nothing more about the matter, but there is no reason to doubt his report. Because Linacre had lived in Italy from c 1486 until 1499 (P.S. Allen ‘Linacre and Latimer in Italy’ *English Historical Review* 18 [1903] 514–17), he probably acquired the manuscript there. On the manuscripts of Terence see the editions by Sidney G. Ashmore, 2nd ed (New York 1910) 60–5 or Robert Kauer and W.M. Lindsay, *Oxford Classical Texts* (rev ed Oxford 1958). See also John N. Grant *Studies in the Textual Tradition of Terence* (Toronto 1986). To which stemma of Terence manuscripts Linacre’s manuscript belonged cannot be determined by the few lines quoted by Erasmus.
- 34 Erasmus was proud of restoring the reading *quale sit prius* (in the 1520 *Adagia* I i 27), but modern texts prefer *quia laesit prior*, as in the earlier quotation. The Linacre manuscript’s reading is also found in some other manuscripts. In the copy of Erasmus’ Cologne 1534 edition I consulted, the words *quale sit prius* were changed to *quia laesit prior* by an early reader. Erasmus’ 1538 Froben edition has *quale sit prius* and a long note on Terence’s troubles with Lanuvinus.
- 35 This word finds little support in the manuscripts, a few of which have *conscribendo*. Modern texts have *scribendo*.
- 36 *nunc nuper dedit*, as in the 1534, 1538, Richard Bentley (1726), and Kauer-Lindsay editions
- 37 Lanuvinus
- 38 Menander was the greatest playwright in the era of Greek New Comedy (fourth century BC). Credited with a hundred plays, most of which have perished, he was enormously influential on later dramatists. For Erasmus’ opinion see *De ratione studii* CWE 24 669:7–8. In the prologue to *Eunuchus*, Terence finds fault with Lanuvinus’ adaptation of Menander’s comedy *Phasma* ‘The Spectre.’

He allows that Lanuvinus 'translated well' but says he wrote badly. For other criticism of Lanuvinus see the prologue to Terence's *Andria*. Erasmus alludes to *Phasma* again in 'The Exorcism' 536:27. Only a few fragments of *Phasma* survive. For these and what is known of the plot from other evidence see Menander ed F.G. Allinson, Loeb Classical Library (London and New York 1921) 448–55.

- 39 Lines 4–5 of the prologue, where Terence says that if anyone – meaning Lanuvinus – believes he is harshly spoken of, 'let him think' and so on
 40 A parody of the ancient formula SPQR: *Senatus populusque Romanus*
 41 'Follow in your footsteps,' 'step to your side'; *Adagia* II vii 12
 42 The time-honoured method; Horace *Ars poetica* 274; *Adagia* IV v 86 (though Erasmus adds that a good poet should be able to tell by hearing the verse whether it is deficient)
 43 See Cicero *Orator* 47.161.
 44 In *Graecis*
 45 Hilary wants to read *ēx Grāe | cīs bōnīs*
 46 *Adagia* I viii 23; see 'Hunting' n5.
 47 Froben's 1538 edition of Erasmus' text also ends this verse with *ex*. In the Cologne 1534 edition *ex* is the first word in the next line, as it is in both quotations of it given in the colloquy. In Bentley's 1726 Terence, which made many emendations, *ex* is shifted to the end of the preceding line, as Eubulus prescribes here. This emendation by Eubulus is unnecessary according to the now generally accepted 'law of *brevis breuians*,' according to which a long syllable preceded by a short can be counted as short if the preceding or following syllable is naturally accented. Hence *bōnīs* is permissible here:

Ēx Grāe | cīs bōnīs | Lātī | nās fē | cīt nōn | bōnīs

- 48 Line 66; so printed in the 1534 and 1538 editions
 49 This line is in scene 1. Normally the prologue and exposition in a Terentian play are written in iambic senarii (trimeter: three measures each with double iambus) – unless copyists err, Priscian adds (*Grammatici Latini* ed H. Keil, 8 vols [Leipzig 1857–80; repr Hildesheim 1961] III 422:22–3) – but by custom certain other measures could be substituted in other scenes of the play and verses could be longer than six feet. Rhythms were loose but predominantly iambic or trochaic. (On Priscian see n52 below)
 50 *-cos*; so it cannot be *-cos par* or *-cos pares*.
 51 *vadum*. The usual meaning is a ford or shallow water, consequently a safe depth for swimmers (*Adagia* I i 45). Sometimes it can mean 'shallows' or shoal, a perilous area for mariners. Here the pejorative sense is clearly required.
 52 Famous ancient grammarian (early sixth century) whose *Institutiones grammaticae* was widely known for a millennium. See vols II and III of Keil's *Grammatici Latini* (n49 above). Among Priscian's works is an exposition of Terentian metres (Keil III 418–29).
 53 When vowels *i* and *u* are pronounced rapidly before another vowel (cf English *union*), they become 'semivowels' and are regarded as consonants; *i* then has the sound of English *y*, consonant *u* (written *v*) that of *w*. See Priscian *Institutiones* 1.17–18 (Keil II 13).
 54 A foot of four shorts (~~~~)

- 55 Contraction of vowels *i* and *u* into one syllable. If consonant *u* (*v*) is elided in the verse we have *sīne īnīdī*, proceleusmatic, in the first foot. If the final *i* here is elided by syneresis of *-ia*, the first foot cannot be proceleusmatic because the *a* is long; it must be a tribrach (˘ ˘ ˘) instead. But see n59 below.
- 56 For *aureo* at the end of the hexameter see *Aeneid* 8.372, 10.116.
- 57 The effect of syneresis
- 58 will be] 'was' until the September 1531 edition
- 59 Priscian (1.22) says *Andria* 66 will not be verse unless the first foot is taken as a tribrach (Keil II 17:2–6). Carinus accordingly proposes to scan it thus:

sīn(e) īnvī | dīa lau | d' īnvēnī | ās ēt ā | mīcōs | pāres.

Modern editors, however, appear to allow the long syllable *inv* in *invidia*, preceding an accented short, to count as short, so the first foot will be a proceleusmatic after all:

sīn(e) īnvīdī | ā lau(dem) | īnvēnī | ās ēt ā | mīcōs | pāres.

In *De recta pronuntiatione*, published in 1528, Erasmus repeats these observations on *Andria* 66; see CWE 26 416.

- 60 *Andria* 165–6
- 61 Modern texts have *sin eveniat*.
- 62 *Andria* 155
- 63 Change in the usual order of words; see *Andria* 155–64.
- 64 The friends remember plots and characters of Terence's comedies as readily as a modern reader recalls those of Shakespeare's major plays, but to check a point they turn to the text discussed, which is at hand.
- 65 *Eunuchus* prologue 17
- 66 A verse of six feet, usually iambic
- 67 *-buntur*. Modern texts have *condonabitur*.
- 68 Greek in the original
- 69 Guests (and perhaps readers) having now had enough of Terence, Erasmus does not allow textual criticism to continue uninterrupted by a little comic relief. His sure instinct for variety and change of pace are characteristic of his control of dialogue.
- 70 *Adagia* IV v 86; see n42 above.
- 71 Olive oil
- 72 In two senses. See 'The Godly Feast' n130.
- 73 Sour juice made of crab-apples or unripe grapes
- 74 The Latin here is an untranslatable pun on *claviculis* (the tendrils of grape vines) in line 12 above and *clavis* 'nails.' Cf 'You can't gather grapes from thorns.'
- 75 Leonard] 'Hilary' until the September 1529 edition, when it was changed to, and remained, 'Leonard'
- 76 Antonio Mancinelli (1452–1505), humanist scholar who left writings on Latin grammar, education, and many other topics. His commentary on Horace (1492) is reprinted with those by other scholars in the edition of Horace by Josse Bade (Paris 1519). See CEBR.
- 77 Pomponius Porphyrio or Porphyrio, third century. For his commentary on Horace see the edition of F. Havthall, 2 vols (Berlin 1864–6; repr Amsterdam 1966).

- 78 *Epodes* 17.50–2
- 79 The commentators
- 80 *nomen* ‘noun.’ The earlier term for what are now called adjectives was ‘noun adjectives’ (as at ‘Copiousness’ 167:5–7). *exilis* as adjective means ‘gaunt,’ ‘feeble.’ The verb is better spelled *exilis*.
- 81 Havthal [n77 above] 1 535:18–536:2, but whether the assertion quoted by Erasmus is actually Porphyrio’s has been questioned. See Havthal’s note.
- 82 The verse is iambic trimeter (six feet, or three with double iambus); the fourth foot is *-īlis*. The quantity fits the second person singular present form of *ex(s)ilio* but not the adjective *exilis* if a spondee is not permissible.
- 83 Ironically, according to Porphyrio (Havthal 1 535:11–15) and Mancinelli (in Bade’s 1519 Horace [n76 above] s4 verso); according to others it is a false or seeming irony. The three lines quoted by Erasmus receive attention from nearly all commentators, but his own concern here is limited to *exilis*.
- 84 Despite what Erasmus implied earlier, Mancinelli knew and said that *ex(s)ilis* is a verb (ibidem s4 verso).
- 85 *Odes* 1.11.2–3
- 86 Erasmus forgets or ignores that Porphyrio, more than a thousand years before Mancinelli wrote, had noted that *possis* is to be understood after *ut melius* (Havthal 1 41:18).
- 87 ‘Mouse’ is Greek in the original.
- 88 Celebrated Roman gourmand and reputed author of a famous book on cookery. See ‘The Profane Feast’ n5.
- 89 That hunger is the best appetizer was a dictum credited to Socrates (Cicero *De finibus* 2.90) but was, or became, proverbial; *Adagia* II vii 69.
- 90 Crato . . . when *parturit* follows.] This speech is assigned to Carinus in editions earlier than June 1526 where, as subsequently, it is given to Crato.
- 91 From a hymn by Caelius Sedulius (c 450), of whom little is known. The received text is as Erasmus quotes it, not as he wished to change it, but in the seventeenth century parts of the hymn were recast for use in divine service and *Hostis Herodes impie* became *Crudelis Herodes Deum*. See *A Dictionary of Hymnology* ed John Julian (New York 1892) 4–5; *Early Latin Hymns* ed A.S. Walpole (Cambridge 1922; repr Hildesheim 1966) 153n. The metre is iambic dimeter. Erasmus’ objection to a trochee after the first foot (*hostis*) is removed by reading *hostis* as a spondee, which is permissible.
- 92 That is, the two long vowels (η, ω) changed to short ones (ε, ο)
- 93 Attributed to St Ambrose but the authorship is uncertain; Julian [n91 above] 584–5
- 94 ‘Conceives’ for ‘conceived,’ present (*concipit*) for past tense (*concepit*), which some manuscripts have. The established text reads *concipit* (Walpole [n91 above] 112). In his *Virginis et martyris comparatio* (1523), written for some Benedictine nuns of Cologne, Erasmus quotes these lines and writes *concipit* (LB V 591F).
- 95 *parturit* is present tense.
- 96 Opening words of a popular hymn by Ambrose. Erasmus quotes the first four lines:

*Deus creator omnium,
Polique rector, vestiens
Diem decoro lumine,
Noctem soporis gratia*

God by whose act the world was born,
From pole to pole earth's lord and king,
Who doth with splendour day adorn
And evening's balm of rest will bring.

These verses are quoted in Augustine's *Confessions* 9.32.

- 97 The dimeter has four feet. A penthemimer consists of five half-feet: *Deus creator*; and as Erasmus observes, it is followed by a trisyllabic word, *omnium*; similarly in the other three verses. The caesura or pause within the line coincides with the end of a word: here at *-tor* in *creator*. Erasmus comments again on *Deus creator* in his exposition of a hymn by Prudentius (LB V 1337C–1339A / CWE 29 174). The lines quoted from *Hostis Herodis impie* and *Deus creator* are metrically quantitative, as we expect in verse of the fourth and fifth centuries, but they can be so read as to suggest the accented verse of medieval Latin poetry. Quantitative verse continued to be written in the post-classical era by poets zealous to emulate or preserve the ancient tradition. Erasmus and countless other humanists, a thousand years after Ambrose and Sedulius, wrote their Latin verse in classical metres. Increasingly in medieval Latin poetry, however, rhythm and syllabic accent and not quantity (longs and shorts) prevailed, as they do in vernacular poetry. Erasmus does not discuss non-classical poetry, though he was well aware of it. We may assume his familiarity with such great medieval Latin poems as Thomas Aquinas' *Pange lingua gloriosi* and Thomas of Celano's *Dies irae*, which are accentual.
- 98 Seneca the Younger, the philosopher (4 BC–65 AD). On confusion of him with his father, Seneca the rhetorician (55 BC–37 AD), see CWE 24 299:3n. On Erasmus' edition of Seneca's *Lucubrationes* (1515, 1529) see Epp 325 and 2091.
- 99 *Adagia* I v 76
- 100 *Epistulae morales* 1.1. Editions of the Latin texts differ as to the 'large' and 'largest' parts. With the thought contrast Cicero *De republica* 1.17.27 and *De officiis* 3.1.
- 101 *Adagia* III vi 66
- 102 12.2.1–1. He condemns some rash remarks by Seneca on Ennius, Cicero, and Virgil.
- 103 *Epistulae morales* 1.1
- 104 *Epistulae morales* 1.2. Death is in the future ('ahead of us'), but because we have come ever closer to it since the moment of birth, we 'die daily' in the sense that it has already caught up with us.
- 105 Leonard] The name was omitted in the first edition and a few later ones. It is in the edition of March 1533.
- 106 *De sophisticis elenchis*. Because it deals with fallacies, ambiguities, and equivocations, this treatise, rediscovered and translated c 1128, became and remained a favourite text of philosophers who studied and discoursed on precise meanings and nuances of words. These so-called 'terminist' logicians, who prized and practised and even abused linguistic analysis, naturally

overestimated their own subtleties at times. Such at any rate was the conviction of the writers of *Moriae encomium*, the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, and dozens of other works ridiculing the academic philosophers and denouncing their barbarous jargon and addiction to quibbling (as the critics deemed it) as much as their paradoxes and propositions. In these matters Erasmus does not criticize Aristotle but Aristotelians. See 'The Godly Feast' n190.

- 107 He refers to the post-classical translations of Aristotle's writings into Latin, principally those by Boethius (c 480–c 524) and William of Moerbeke (c 1211–86). Of the many manuscripts and printed editions available to him it is impossible to say which Erasmus may have consulted. The critical edition in the series *Aristoteles Latinus* ed L. Minio-Paluello, G. Verbeke, et al (Bruges-Paris 1954–66, Brussels-Leiden 1968–) is the most convenient means of checking his allusions to the Latin Aristotle and will be cited in these notes. For *De sophisticis elenchis* in that series see vi parts 1–3 (*Translatio Boethii, fragmenta translatio Jacobi, recensio Guillelmi Moerbeki*) ed Bernardus G. Dod (1975).
- 108 *De sophisticis elenchis* 4 165b30–3
- 109 Boethius *Aristoteles Latinus* vi 8:13–15. The translation quoted by Erasmus differs slightly from William of Moerbeke's (ibidem 78:35–7). In line 8 Boethius and William have *et* instead of *ad*. Some manuscripts have *adintelligere*.
- 110 The ambiguity discussed here goes back to the *Euthydemus* of Plato (276E–277C). In this dialogue Plato exposes the 'sophistical' arguments of the Sophists, which depend on using ambiguous words in different senses. The Greek verb *μαρθάνειν* can mean both 'to learn' and 'to understand.' The example is taken from the classroom. Much instruction was carried on in the ancient world through dictation: the master dictated to the boys, who had to write or say what they heard. But to do this, it is argued, the pupils had to *understand* their letters. The teacher is therefore teaching what the students already *know*. But one can only *learn* what one does not *know*! By such play on the ambiguities of language the Sophists tried to confound their opponents.
There is a further ambiguity in the passage which Aristotle did not intend. For 'those who know their letters' Aristotle uses the single word *γραμματικοί*. For this the Latin translators chose *grammatici*, but the usual meaning of this word is 'scholars,' 'teachers of language and literature,' and it was in this sense that Erasmus understood the word in the Latin Aristotle. This may have led him to believe that the ambiguity which Aristotle was pointing to in *μαρθάνειν* lay in the double meaning 'to teach' and 'to learn.' But the Greek verb cannot mean 'to teach.'
- 111 Two marginalia in the Latin translation of Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary on *De sophisticis elenchis*, by Guilelmus Dorotheus Venetus (Paris 1542; University of Pennsylvania copy), call attention to Erasmus' criticism of the Latin version of this work in the colloquy. Alexander of Aphrodisias was the most important of the Greek commentators on Aristotle.
- 112 Boethius has *disciplina, disciplinam, William scientia, scientiam*.
- 113 I do not know . . . who receive the dictation.] Added in the March 1524 edition. These lines represent Erasmus' second, and better, thoughts. *Cognoscere* in Latin is a better equivalent of *μαρθάνειν*, since it can mean both 'to learn' (as of a judge 'learning' a case) and 'to know.' Erasmus, however, is content to

insert these lines here without removing the earlier version. The ambiguity in *μανθάνειν* is indeed in the double meaning, 'learn/understand,' not in the supposed meanings, 'teach/learn.'

- 114 The translation to which Erasmus objects is Boethius' (*Aristoteles Latinus* vi 8:13–14). William of Moerbeke has *nam quae per os proferunt discunt grammatici* (ibidem 78:36–7). ASD 1-3 prints *qui* for *quae* (354:322), but my copy of the first edition of the colloquy (August 1523) has *quae*; so has the March 1533 text.
- 115 That is, since *grammatici* are teachers, not students, they do not 'learn what they dictate,' but 'teach what they dictate'
- 116 Aristotle *De sophisticis elenchis* 4 166a7–8
- 117 Boethius *velle accipere me pugnantes*; William of Moerbeke *vellem accipere me pugnantes*, but *vellem* is suspect (*Aristoteles Latinus* vi 9:2; 79:8).
- 118 Aristotle *De sophisticis elenchis* 4 166a8–9. Boethius and William of Moerbeke *putas quod quis scit hoc scit* (*Aristoteles Latinus* vi 9:2–3; 79:8).
- 119 Aristotle *De sophisticis elenchis* 4 166a9–10
- 120 Aristotle *De sophisticis elenchis* 4 166a10–12. Boethius *Aristoteles Latinus* vi 9:4–5; William of Moerbeke ibidem 79:9–10
- 121 So Boethius and William (*Aristoteles Latinus* vi 9:5–7; 79:11–12)
- 122 In line 14 above
- 123 Catullus 4.1–2. This is a rare example in Latin of the Greek construction of the nominative and the infinitive. Latin would normally use the accusative and the infinitive, *celerrimum* instead of *celerrimus*.
- 124 Such . . . editions.] Added in the August–September 1524 edition
- 125 Aristotle *De sophisticis elenchis* 4 166a12–15. The ambiguity in Aristotle rests on the two possible interpretations of *σιγῶντα*, which can be either masculine singular ('being silent') or neuter plural ('silent things') and may also be either the subject of *λέγειν* or object. If it is a singular subject, the meaning is 'for a man to speak while being silent'; if it is a plural object, it means 'to speak of silent things.' *Tacentem dicere* has no such ambiguity; the Latin translation therefore fails to make sense.
- We should note, however, that Erasmus' explanation of the ambiguity implies the reading *dicentem tacere*, which could mean both 'to speak while silent' and 'to be silent about the speaker.' This is a satisfactory example of ambiguity, but it is not the same ambiguity as in Aristotle.
- 126 Boethius has here *hunc dicentem tacere*; William of Moerbeke *scilicet et tacentem dicere* (*Aristoteles Latinus* vi 9:8; 79:13).
- 127 *Adagia* i vii 91. Cf 'Additional formulae' n15.
- 128 This passage alludes to *De sophisticis elenchis* 4 166a15–30, where Aristotle speaks of a mode of equivocation and ambiguity that exists when a word has more than one meaning if taken in combination with another word. The first example is 'know letters.' It is true that Boethius (*Aristoteles Latinus* vi 9:12–16) and William of Moerbeke (ibidem 79:16–19) change this to 'know the age,' presumably because they wished to make Aristotle's meaning clear or because they followed an erroneous reading in their Greek text. Erasmus complains that although 'to know letters' makes sense, to say 'letters know' something is nonsense.
- 129 See lines 404:3–9 below.

- 130 402:14–19 above
- 131 *De sophisticis elenchis* 4 166b1–6, referring to *Iliad* 23.328
- 132 The example refers to two different passages in Homer. The distinction made here between the meanings of *διδόμεν* (epic form of infinitive for imperative; another form of the infinitive is *διδόναι*) and *δίδομεν* (first person plural indicative active) is valid, but the words ‘We allow him to win glory’ are spoken by Poseidon in *Iliad* 21.297, not by Zeus (Jove) himself. Zeus had earlier sent a dream to promise Agamemnon that the Greeks would conquer Troy (*Iliad* 2.1–15).
- 133 Boethius (*Aristoteles Latinus* VI 10:7–10); William (ibidem 79:34–7); and perhaps other translators or commentators
- 134 *Odes* 1.25.7–8
- 135 *Aeneid* 5.13
- 136 If *quia* is printed as a separate word it is a causal conjunction; if joined to *nam* as *quianam* it means ‘why,’ ‘wherefore,’ and is interrogative. Erasmus’ text has *quia* separate in both the first (August 1523) and final (March 1533) authorized editions, but the accepted reading in modern editions of Virgil is *quianam*.
- 137 *Adagia* I vii 57
- 138 *Adagia* I ix 75
- 139 Cf ‘The Godly Feast’ 187:9–12 and n140.
- 140 The scene recalls the more elaborate descriptions of Eusebius’ gardens in ‘The Godly Feast.’
- 141 Although Erasmus neither achieved nor aspired to the eminence in verse that he won as a writer of prose, he was fond of poetry in his youth (Allen Ep 1581:524), and it continued to be of importance to him both for its own sake and for its place in the kind of education, moral as well as literary, that he believed to be the best. The only kind of verse he himself wrote, or wrote of, was Greek and Latin, if we except his attention to the Hebrew Psalms. Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* was for a long time the only easily available text of Erasmus’ poems. The reader should now consult CWE 85–6 (Toronto 1993), which contains the Greek and Latin text of the poems newly edited and annotated by Harry Vredeveld and a translation by Clarence H. Miller. Consult also D.F.S. Thomson ‘Erasmus as a Poet in the Context of Northern Humanism’ *Commémoration nationale d’Erasme* (Brussels 1970) 187–210. For convenient collections of Neo-Latin verse see *Renaissance Latin Verse* ed Alessandro Perosa and John Sparrow (Chapel Hill 1979); *An Anthology of Neo-Latin Poetry* ed and trans Fred J. Nichols (New Haven and London 1979); and Sparrow’s essay ‘Latin Verse of the High Renaissance’ in *Italian Renaissance Studies* ed E.F. Jacob (London 1960) 354–409. Contests in composing verse extemporaneously on an assigned theme were popular in social gatherings of *litterati* and in the fifteenth-century courts of Flanders and Burgundy (*New Cambridge Modern History* I *The Renaissance, 1493–1520* ed G.R. Potter [Cambridge 1957] 61–2); see also Sparrow’s essay 359–60. Capping verses was a literary recreation naturally attractive to the educated – which meant to Latinists; and never more so than in the Renaissance.
- 142 The poems that follow are not mere metrical exercises but graceful verses on a common theme. The theme is a serious one, even though the setting is informal.

Comparison of the care of a garden to the cultivation of the soul was a subject too close to central issues in the moral life to tempt Erasmus to frivolity; it was moreover a subject of thematic interest since antiquity and therefore one of inherent dignity.

- 143 Iambic senarii in the original. Cf n3 above. On the metres of the Latin (and one Greek) poems see CWE 85–6 352–7, 716–17 no 130 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 115, 387 Appendix 1–4. The translations, while resorting sometimes to paraphrase, attempt to imitate the original metres.
For ‘a fool at last’ (*facit praepostere*) cf *Adagia* vi i 30.
- 144 Martial 2.89.3
- 145 So Erasmus, but often the rival of the nightingale in this ludicrous contest is an owl. In *Adagia* iv iv 11 and 12 he quotes Theocritus, ‘At the death of Daphnis the stag hunts the hounds, the screech owl contends with nightingales in song’ (*Idylls* 1.135–6), as an example of something preposterous (cf Virgil *Eclogues* 8:52–5). The *Scholia* on the *Colloquies*, added in the June 1526 edition and often reprinted in later issues, add that the cuckoo and the nightingale invite an ass to be judge. The ass is unimpressed by both singers but decides in favour of the cuckoo. This additional absurdity is repeated by the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century annotators. The source I do not know; it may be some folk tale or jest book. The role of the ass is described in a fable included in a letter (October 1760) by Diderot (*Lettres à Sophie Volland* ed André Babelon [Paris 1930] I 249–52), as Saulnier (introduction 390 above) notes.
- 146 Hendecasyllabics (Phalaecean)
- 147 *Adagia* III vi 96
- 148 Trochaic octonarii or tetrameters
- 149 Dactylic hexameter
- 150 Alcaics
- 151 Sapphics
- 152 Aphorisms, *sententiae*, and comparisons or *paraboliae* were collected and printed in abundance in Erasmus’ time and treasured for their moral value and rhetorical elegance. He contributed to this vast wealth of material in his *Apophthegmata*, *Adagia*, and *Paraboliae*.
Despite Hilary’s remark that Leonard’s suggestion is a good subject for poetry, the first four maxims submitted are in prose. Leonard himself offers one in Greek verse.
- 153 See ‘Courtship’ n57.
- 154 Iambic senarii, in Greek
- 155 Horace *Odes* 1.1.20

AN EXAMINATION CONCERNING THE FAITH

Inquisitio de fide

First printed in the March 1524 edition.

The original title was *Inquisitio*; then *de fide* was added in the edition of March 1529.

Fides here means belief, 'the faith,' Christian doctrine. Except for the opening and closing pages, the colloquy seems at first a conventional, pious exposition of the Apostles' Creed, but when the prologue and concluding lines are given due weight, and the date and circumstances of its composition known, the inquiry proves to be something more than just another catechism. It is a significant document in one chapter of Reformation history and of Erasmus' biography. Though an irenic work, it appeared in print when he had already decided to write against Luther, and it should be read with this decision in mind. Erasmus said later that he had intended to make it longer, but he never did so. See 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1102:38–9.

Erasmus himself tells us that Aulus, the inquisitor, represents 'me or another orthodox person' (his name suggests *aula* 'court' and hence the Roman or papal curia), while Barbatius is Luther himself or a Lutheran or a Lutheran theologian, 'suspected of heresy' ('The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' [1526] 1102:36; Allen Ep 1858:386–8 [1527]; *Apologia adversus monachos* [1528] LB IX 1060C; *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* [1532] LB IX 944A). Aulus quizzes Barbatius on the articles of the Apostles' Creed. The clue to the special interest and importance of this dialogue is its date. It was printed only six months before the publication of Erasmus' *De libero arbitrio* (September 1524), his critical essay on Luther's doctrine of the bondage of the will. 'An Examination concerning the Faith' contains no allusion to the problem of the will. The examination of Barbatius is concerned solely with the Apostles' Creed. Why? Because whoever professes that creed sincerely is orthodox in belief. Barbatius easily passes the test. Aulus, the Catholic, initially nervous even about talking to him at all because he may have been anathematized (421:10 below), discovers to his own surprise that the Lutheran is indeed orthodox on the Apostles' Creed. The corollary is inescapable: Luther is no heretic. If they put aside their differences over discipline, ceremonies, indulgences, and other such matters not necessary to salvation, Catholics and Lutherans would find they agreed on the meaning of the Apostles' Creed. The reader is left to wonder why, if this is so, all those other matters recently in dispute could not have been settled and schism avoided, since they were of lesser importance, or at any rate not essential *ad salutem*.

The famous dictum that Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched seemed true to conservatives and reformers alike. Erasmus had been brilliantly critical of weaknesses in the church long before anyone heard of Luther. He agreed that many of Luther's strictures on Rome and the prelates were justified and said so. He was convinced also that many of the attacks on Luther were assaults by obscurantists on learning and letters. But he resisted attempts to label him pro-Luther or anti-Luther, insisting that he approved of what was good in Luther's protests and deplored what was bad. For some years he tried to persuade princes and prelates to effect reforms, and Luther to moderate his language and actions. As long as possible he evaded the requests of popes, cardinals, and bishops that he come out against Luther. He preferred, perhaps, to remain above the battle, but circumstances finally forced him to take a stand. By 1521 he was concluding that Luther had ruined his case, and long before 1524 he decided that Lutheran intransigence was as much to blame for the sad course of events since 1519 as was the bigotry of the friars and monks, who in Erasmus' opinion had been mainly responsible for the Lutheran troubles (Allen Ep 1875:138–54).

In September 1523 he informed King Henry VIII of England that he was preparing something against the new (Lutheran) teachings (Allen Ep 1385:11–12 / CWE Ep 1385:15–16). In February 1524 he told the new pope, Clement VII, that *De libero arbitrio* 'in answer to Luther' was now in hand (Allen Ep 1418:53–5 / CWE Ep 1418:57–8), and a draft went to Henry a few weeks later (Ep 1430). About the same time or very soon afterwards 'An Examination concerning the Faith' was published. It may be regarded as a sort of final statement, regretful and resigned, of what might have been; an affirmation by Erasmus, before he issued *De libero arbitrio*, that Catholics and Lutherans did in fact agree on the *essential* articles of the faith and that the lamentable disruption in Christendom was due to other causes, many of them discreditable.

Erasmus saw no inconsistency in working on this colloquy and *De libero arbitrio* at the same time. He did not consider the question of the will, baffling though irresistible to some minds as that question is, to be essential to Christian faith and certainly not to Christian unity (*De libero arbitrio* LB IX 1216C–1217E; for a translation see *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation* ed and trans E. Gordon Rupp, A.N. Marlow, P.S. Watson, B. Drewery, Library of Christian Classics 17 [Philadelphia and London 1969] 38–41). To Luther, on the contrary, it was vital, decisive. For this reason he thanked Erasmus in his reply, *De servo arbitrio* (1525), for not taking up his time with discussions of the papacy, purgatory, indulgences, and 'suchlike trifles' but going to the heart of their differences (WA 18 604:11–14, 609:15–614:26, 786:25–32 or Clemen 3 98:37–99:1, 103:23–107:15, 292:10–18; translation in Rupp et al 107, 113–17, 333).

Two contemporary translations or adaptations of 'An Examination concerning the Faith' deserve mention. Louis de Berquin's French version of the colloquy, *Le symbole des apostres de Jesuchrist* (Paris 1525), omits the introductory and concluding lines and the names of the two speakers, using instead simply 'Question' and 'Answer.' See the facsimile edition, with introduction and commentary, by E.V. Telle (Geneva 1979). Berquin's versions of *Inquisitio de fide* and the other three works of Erasmus that he translated were condemned by the Paris faculty of theology; on Berquin see the introduction to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 281. The Spanish reformer Juan de Valdés imitated and borrowed from *Inquisitio de fide* in the first part (*Credo*) of his *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* (Alcalá 1529; facsimile edition by Marcel Bataillon [Coimbra 1925]). On Valdés and other Spanish Erasmians see Bataillon *Erasme et l'Espagne*. Juan de Valdés was also indebted to 'The Whole Duty of Youth' (see the introduction 90).

The Paris theologians, after some years of intermittent discussion of Erasmus' writings, finally produced a *determinatio* concerning them in December 1527, but this was not printed until 1531. They had already condemned the *Colloquies* in May 1526, censuring six passages in 'An Examination concerning the Faith.' On these see nn32, 37, 87, 97, 98, 109 below; texts in *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 943E-947F.

Erasmus' reactions to Luther and Lutheranism prior to March 1524, and the development of his various plans for writing on Luther, are reviewed in the more extensively annotated Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 1-49. For Erasmus' later dialogue on the Apostles' Creed, *Explanatio symboli* or *Symbolum* (1533), see n16 below.

AULUS, BARBATIUS

Aulus 'Greet cordially,' as the children's verse says. But I don't know if it's permissible for me to wish you well.¹

5 **Barbatius** Certainly I'd prefer one who'd make me well to one who merely wished it. But why do you say this, Aulus?

Aulus Why? Because, if you want to know, you smell of brimstone² or Jove's thunderbolt.³

Barbatius There are little Joves⁴ too; and harmless thunderbolts, quite different in origin from the fateful ones.⁵ For you refer to the anathema, I suppose.

10 **Aulus** A good guess.

Barbatius I've heard horrendous thunderings, to be sure, but I've not been hit by a bolt.

Aulus How's that?

Barbatus My digestion is no worse and my sleep no less sound.

Aulus But this mischief is usually the more dangerous because it's not perceived. In fact these 'harmless' thunderbolts, as you term them, strike the mountains and seas.⁶

- 5 **Barbatus** They strike but do no harm. And there's lightning that comes from glass or a brass jar.⁷

Aulus Yes, and even this terrifies.

Barbatus True, but only children. God alone has a thunderbolt to strike the soul.⁸

- 10 **Aulus** What if God is in his vicar?⁹

Barbatus I wish he may be!¹⁰

Aulus Nay, many marvel that you haven't been burned to a cinder long before this.

- 15 **Barbatus** Suppose I had: so much the more, then, was the salvation of a lost soul to be hoped for, if we accept the teaching of the gospel.

Aulus Hoped for, yes, but not to be mentioned.

Barbatus Why?

Aulus In order that the one struck by the thunderbolt might be ashamed and repent.

- 20 **Barbatus** If God had treated us so, we would all have perished.

Aulus Why?

- Barbatus** Because when we were enemies of God, worshippers of idols, serving in Satan's camp – that is, most excommunicate¹¹ in every respect – then especially did God speak to us through his Son, and by his discourse
25 restore us to life, dead though we were.

Aulus What you say is perfectly true.

Barbatus More than that, it would go hard with all the sick if the physician turned his back whenever one were laid low by some terrible disease; on the contrary, that's when a physician is needed most.

- 30 **Aulus** But I fear you may infect me with your malady sooner than I would cure your disease. Sometimes it happens that one who attends a sick man becomes a wrestler¹² instead of a healer.

Barbatus In physical ailments it so happens, yes, but in spiritual ills you've a ready antidote against every contagion.

- 35 **Aulus** What is it?

Barbatus An inflexible resolution not to be swerved from a decision once formed. Besides, why fear the wrestling-place when the matter's fought out with words?

Aulus True enough, provided there's hope for improvement.

- 40 **Barbatus** 'While there's life there's hope,' according to the proverb.¹³ And according to Paul, charity knows not despair because it 'hopeth all things.'¹⁴

Aulus Your advice is not at all bad, and in this hope I think it's permissible for me to chat with you a little. If you agree, I'll play the part of physician.

Barbatius Agreed.

Aulus Inquisitive persons are usually resented, but physicians are praised
5 for asking about particulars.

Barbatius Inquire from top to bottom¹⁵ if you like.

Aulus I'll try, if only you promise to answer sincerely.

Barbatius Promised, if I may know what you want to inquire about.

Aulus The Apostles' Creed.¹⁶

10 **Barbatius** I note the military term,¹⁷ and I'm content to be regarded as an enemy of Christ if I deceive you on this subject.

Aulus Do you believe¹⁸ in God the Father almighty,¹⁹ who formed²⁰ heaven and earth?

15 **Barbatius** Yes, and whatever is contained in heaven and earth, and the angelic intelligences also.

Aulus When you say 'God,' what do you mean?

Barbatius I mean there is an eternal mind that had no beginning and shall have no end, than which nothing can be greater, wiser, or better.²¹

Aulus Quite reverently spoken.

20 **Barbatius** Which by its omnipotent will created whatever exists, visible or invisible;²² which with wondrous wisdom disposes and governs all things, by its goodness nourishes and preserves all things, and has freely restored the fallen race of men.

Aulus Certainly these are the three principal attributes in God. But what do
25 you gain by knowledge of them?

Barbatius When I reflect that he is omnipotent,²³ I surrender myself wholly to him by comparison with whose majesty high estate of men or angels is nothing. Next, I believe with complete confidence what Sacred Scripture teaches was done by him, and at the same time that whatever he promised
30 shall come to pass, since he can do at his pleasure whatever he wishes, however impossible it may seem to men. Thus it is that, not relying on my own strength, I depend entirely on him who can do all things. When I contemplate his wisdom, I attribute nothing to my own, but I believe all things are done by him perfectly righteously and perfectly justly,
35 even though by human judgment they may seem unreasonable or unjust. When I consider his goodness, I see there is nothing in me that I do not owe to his grace, freely bestowed, and I think there is no sin, however great, that he would not be willing to forgive to one who is penitent, nor is there anything he would not grant to one who seeks it with implicit
40 trust.

Aulus You don't think it's enough to believe him to be such?

Barbatius Not at all, but with sincere devotion I put all my trust and hope in him alone, renouncing Satan and every idolatry, and whatever magic arts there may be.²⁴ God alone I worship, preferring nothing to him, deeming nothing equal to him, neither angel nor parents nor children nor wife nor prince nor riches nor honours nor pleasures; ready even to lose my life for his sake if he commands; certain that one who puts his whole confidence in him cannot perish.

Aulus Then you worship nothing, fear nothing, love nothing but the 'one God'?

10 **Barbatius** If I revere anything, fear anything, love anything except him, it is for his sake I love, fear, worship: referring everything to his glory, always thanking him whether happiness or sorrow befalls me, whether it be my lot to die or to live.

15 **Aulus** So far your discourse is sound indeed. What do you think about the second Person?

Barbatius Ask me.

Aulus Do you believe Jesus was God and man?

Barbatius Absolutely.

20 **Aulus** How was it possible for the same one to be immortal God and mortal man?²⁵

25 **Barbatius** For him who can do whatever he wills, that was easy to accomplish. And because of his divine nature – the same which he shares with the Father – whatever greatness, wisdom, and goodness I attribute to the Father I attribute likewise to the Son; whatever I owe to the Father, I owe to the Son also, save that it was the Father's decision to create all things, and bestow them on us, through the Son.²⁶

Aulus Why, then, does Sacred Scripture quite frequently call the Son 'Lord' rather than 'God'?

30 **Barbatius** Because 'God' is a name of authority, that is,²⁷ of sovereignty. It is especially appropriate to the Father, who is²⁸ unconditionally the source of all things and the fountain-head also of Deity itself. 'Lord' is a word for²⁹ redeemer and saviour – though the Father redeemed through the Son, and the Son is God, but of God³⁰ the Father. The Father alone is from none,³¹ and holds the first place among the divine Persons.³²

35 **Aulus** And do you, therefore, put your trust in Jesus?

Barbatius Of course.

Aulus But the prophet declares that he who puts his trust in man is accursed.³³

40 **Barbatius** But to this one man is given all power in heaven and earth,³⁴ that at his name 'every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.'³⁵ Though I wouldn't rest my main

hope and trust – my sacred anchor, as they say³⁶ – in him unless he were God.³⁷

Aulus Why is he called Son?³⁸

Barbatus So that no one may imagine him to be a creature.³⁹

5 **Aulus** Why ‘only’?⁴⁰

Barbatus To distinguish a natural son from adopted sons.⁴¹ The honour of this title is conferred on us also, to the end that we should look for no other Son but this one.

Aulus Why have him who was God become man?

10 **Barbatus** That man might reconcile men to God.

Aulus Do you believe he was conceived without man’s act, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and born of the undefiled Virgin Mary,⁴² with a mortal body taken from her substance?⁴³

Barbatus Most assuredly.

15 **Aulus** Why did he will to be born so?

Barbatus Because it was fitting for God to be born so: fitting for the one who would purge away the filth of our conception and birth to be born so. God willed to be born Son of Man, that through rebirth in him we might become sons of God.⁴⁴

20 **Aulus** Do you believe he lived on earth, performed those miracles, and taught those things proclaimed in the Gospels?

Barbatus More surely than I believe you are a man.

Aulus I’m no Apuleius turned inside out, that you should suppose an ass lurks under the form of a man.⁴⁵ – But do you believe this same one is
25 that Messiah whom the types of the Law foreshadowed, whom the oracles of the prophets promised,⁴⁶ whom the Jews yearned for during so many ages?

Barbatus I believe nothing more steadfastly.

Aulus Do you believe his life and teaching are sufficient for perfect piety?

30 **Barbatus** Yes, of course.

Aulus Do you believe he was really⁴⁷ seized by the Jews, bound, struck and beaten, spit upon, mocked, scourged under Pontius Pilate,⁴⁸ and finally nailed to a cross and there died?⁴⁹

Barbatus I do indeed.

35 **Aulus** Do you believe he was free from all manner of sin whatsoever?

Barbatus Certainly; a lamb without spot.⁵⁰

Aulus Do you believe he suffered all these things of his own will?⁵¹

Barbatus More than that, he suffered them gladly, even eagerly, but by the will of the Father.

40 **Aulus** Why did the Father will that his only Son, pure and most dear to him, should suffer torments so cruel?

Barbatus That by means of this victim he might reconcile to himself us, the guilty, if we put our trust and hope in his name.

Aulus Why did God allow the whole human race to fall thus? And, if he did allow it, was there no other way open to restore our ruin?

5 **Barbatus** Faith, not human reason, has persuaded me that there could not have been a better one or a more profitable one for our salvation.

Aulus Why did this kind of death please him most?⁵²

Barbatus Because in the eyes of the world it was the most ignominious form of death; because it was one of slow and terrible suffering; because it
10 was suitable to him who, with his limbs stretched out to every quarter of the world, would call all the nations to salvation, and summon men intent on earthly cares to heavenly ones.⁵³ Finally, in order to symbolize to us the brazen serpent which Moses hung on a pole, so that whoever fixed their eyes on it should be healed of the bite of serpents,⁵⁴ and that he might fulfil the
15 promise of the prophet who had prophesied: 'Say ye among nations, God hath reigned from a tree.'⁵⁵

Aulus Why did he will to be buried too, and so carefully, anointed with myrrh and ointments, shut up in a new tomb cut from solid living rock,⁵⁶ the entrance sealed, and public guards posted there?

20 **Barbatus** To make it the more evident that he was truly dead.

Aulus Why didn't he come to life at once?

Barbatus For this same reason: because if his death had been doubtful, his resurrection too would have been doubtful – but this resurrection he intended to be most certain.

25 **Aulus** Do you believe his soul descended to hell?

Barbatus Cyprian⁵⁷ bears witness that formerly this article was not a part either of the Roman Creed or of that of the Eastern churches;⁵⁸ nor is it mentioned in Tertullian,⁵⁹ a very ancient writer. Nevertheless I myself firmly believe this too,⁶⁰ both because it agrees with the prophecy of the psalm,
30 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,'⁶¹ and again, 'Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave,'⁶² and because the apostle Peter, in the third chapter of his first Epistle (whose authorship no one ever doubted), wrote thus: 'Being put to death in the flesh but quickened in the spirit, by which also he preached to those who were in prison, coming in the spirit.'⁶³ But, as I
35 believe he descended to hell, so I do *not* believe he suffered anything there;⁶⁴ for he descended not to be tormented there but to shatter the kingdom of Satan for us.

Aulus So far I hear nothing irreverent. But he died to recall to life us who were dead in sin. Yet why did he come to life again?

40 **Barbatus** For three reasons, mainly.

Aulus What?

Barbatus First, to provide us with a sure hope of resurrection. Next, that we might know that he to whom we entrusted the safeguarding of our salvation is immortal and will never die. Finally, that we, dead to sins through repentance, buried along with him through baptism,⁶⁵ might be recalled through his grace to newness of life.

Aulus Do you believe that the same body⁶⁶ which died on the cross, which came to life⁶⁷ in the tomb, which was seen and touched by the disciples, ascended to heaven?⁶⁸

Barbatus Certainly.

Aulus Why did he will to leave the earth?

Barbatus That we might all love him spiritually and no one on earth claim Christ exclusively for himself, but all alike lift up our hearts to heaven, knowing that our head is there. For if men now are so pleased with themselves on account of the colour and shape of a garment, and when some boast of the blood or foreskin of Christ and the milk of the Virgin Mary,⁶⁹ what do you think would happen had he remained on earth, clothed, eating, talking? What disagreements would have come about through those things that pertain to the body!

Aulus Do you believe that, being granted immortality, he sits there at the right hand of the Father?⁷⁰

Barbatus Of course: as lord of all things and sharer of the entire kingdom of the Father. He himself had promised his disciples this would happen and showed this sight to his martyr Stephen.⁷¹

Aulus Why did he show it?

Barbatus That we might be without fear, knowing how powerful a lord and protector we have in heaven.

Aulus Do you believe he will return in that same body to judge the living and the dead?⁷²

Barbatus I am as certain that whatever he would have us expect will occur hereafter as I am that what the prophets had foretold of Christ has been accomplished thus far.⁷³ His first coming was revealed in accordance with the predictions of the prophets, when he came meek and lowly to teach and to save us. A second will be revealed too, in which he will come exalted, in the glory of the Father,⁷⁴ before whose judgment seat all men will be forced to stand, of whatever nation or whatever rank, whether kings or commoners, Greeks or Scythians,⁷⁵ not only those whom his coming will take alive⁷⁶ but also all those who have died from the beginning of the world until that time will suddenly be made alive, and each, in his own body, will face his judge.⁷⁷ There too will be the blessed angels as faithful servants, and the devils to be judged. Then from on high will he pronounce that inescapable sentence which shall deliver the devil and his crew to eternal punishment,⁷⁸

that thereafter they may be powerless to harm anyone. The faithful he will transfer to the fellowship of the heavenly kingdom, safe from all affliction. The day of his coming, however, he would have unknown to us.⁷⁹

Aulus I hear nothing wrong⁸⁰ yet, so let us come to the third Person.⁸¹

5 **Barbatus** As you like.

Aulus Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

Barbatus I believe he is true God, along with the Father and the Son.⁸² I believe those who gave us the books of the Old and New Testaments were inspired by this Spirit, without whose power no one attains salvation.

10 **Aulus** Why is he called 'Spirit'?

Barbatus Because as our bodies live by breath, so our souls are animated by the silent inspiration of the Holy Spirit.⁸³

Aulus Isn't it permissible to call the Father Spirit?

Barbatus Yes, of course.

15 **Aulus** Aren't the Persons confused, then?

Barbatus No. The Father is called Spirit because he is incorporeal – as is common to all the Persons in accordance with their divine nature. But the third Person is called Spirit because it 'bloweth where it listeth'⁸⁴ and penetrates our hearts imperceptibly, as breezes blow from land or stream.

20 **Aulus** Why is the name 'Son' given to the second Person?

Barbatus Because of the perfect likeness of nature and will.

Aulus Is the Son more like the Father than the Holy Spirit is?⁸⁵

Barbatus Not with respect to divinity, except that the Holy Spirit's proceeding from the Son as well means the Son has more likeness to the distinctive nature of the Father.

25 **Aulus** Then what is to forbid calling the Holy Spirit 'Son'?

Barbatus The fact that (following St Hilary)⁸⁶ I nowhere read he was begotten, nor do I read of his Father; I do read of 'Spirit' and 'proceeding from.'⁸⁷

30 **Aulus** Why⁸⁸ is the Father alone called God in the Creed?

Barbatus Because, as I said, he is absolutely the author of all that are and the fountain-head of the whole Deity.⁸⁹

Aulus Speak more plainly.

Barbatus Because nothing can be named that does not come originally from the Father; for this very fact, that Son and Holy Spirit are God, is admittedly due to the Father. Therefore the principal authority,⁹⁰ that is, the primary source,⁹¹ is in the Father alone, because he alone is without beginning. The Creed, however, can be so understood that the word 'God' is not specific to a Person but general, for subsequently it is broken down by the terms 'Father,'
 40 'Son,' and 'Holy Spirit,' 'in one God': this, the term for the divine nature, comprises Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three Persons.⁹²

Aulus Do you believe in the holy church?⁹³

Barbatius No.

Aulus What's that you say? You don't believe in it?

Barbatius I believe the holy church, which is the body of Christ,⁹⁴ that is,
5 a certain community⁹⁵ of all persons throughout the world who agree in
the gospel faith, who worship one God the Father, who place their whole
trust in his Son,⁹⁶ who are guided by the same Spirit proceeding from him: a
community from whose fellowship anyone who commits mortal sin is cut off.

Aulus Why are you afraid to say 'I believe *in* the holy church'?⁹⁷

10 **Barbatius** Because St Cyprian taught me that we must believe in God alone,
in whom we trust absolutely. But the church, properly so called,⁹⁸ though it
consists of none except the good,⁹⁹ nevertheless consists of human beings,
who can change from good to bad, deceive and be deceived.

Aulus What do you think of the communion of saints?¹⁰⁰

15 **Barbatius** Cyprian does not mention this article at all,¹⁰¹ though he specifies
in what churches certain beliefs were given greater or lesser importance.
He connects the two articles thus: 'For after this expression there follows:
the holy church, the remission of sins, the resurrection of this flesh.'¹⁰² And
some think this article¹⁰³ does not differ from the preceding,¹⁰⁴ but explains
20 and emphasizes what was just said, namely 'the holy church,' so that the
church is nothing else but the profession of one God, one gospel, one faith,
one hope, the participation in the same Spirit and the same sacraments¹⁰⁵ –
in short, such a sharing of all good gifts¹⁰⁶ among all godly people from the
beginning of the world even to the end, as is the fellowship of parts of the
25 body among themselves, so that the good deeds of all benefit one another, as
long as they are living members of the body.¹⁰⁷ But outside this fellowship
not even his own good deeds lead a man to salvation unless he is reconciled
with the holy congregation. And therefore follows 'the remission of sins,'
because outside the church there is no remission of sins,¹⁰⁸ however much a
30 man may torment himself with acts of penance or perform works of mercy.
Not in the church of heretics, I say, but in the holy church, gathered by the
spirit of Christ, is remission of sins through baptism,¹⁰⁹ and after baptism
through penance¹¹⁰ and the keys given to the church.¹¹¹

Aulus These are still the words of a sound man. Do you believe there will
35 be a resurrection of the flesh?¹¹²

Barbatius I would believe the rest in vain if I did not believe this, which is
the most important of all.¹¹³

Aulus What do you mean when you say 'flesh'?

Barbatius A human body animated by a human soul.

40 **Aulus** Surely each soul won't receive its own body which it left behind
lifeless?

Barbatius The same one it departed from.¹¹⁴ And therefore is added, in Cyprian's creed,¹¹⁵ 'of *this* flesh.'

Aulus How is it possible for a body already changed so often from one thing to another to come to life as the same body?

- 5 **Barbatius** Would it be difficult for him who could create whatever he wished *ex nihilo* to restore to its original nature what is changed from its intrinsic form? I don't investigate anxiously how this may be done; enough for me that he who promised it will happen is so truthful that he cannot lie, so powerful that whatsoever he wills he can accomplish by a nod.

- 10 **Aulus** Why will there be need of a body then?

Barbatius In order that the whole man who was wholly afflicted here for Christ's sake may be glorified with Christ.¹¹⁶

Aulus Why the addition of 'and the life everlasting'?

- Barbatius** Lest anyone should imagine we shall rise as frogs revive at
15 the coming of spring, to die again. For death here is twofold: of the body, common to good and bad alike, and of the soul. Now the death of the soul is sin. But after the resurrection there will be eternal life, both of body and of soul, for the righteous. For the body will no longer be liable to diseases, old age, hunger, thirst, pain, weariness, death, or any
20 trouble, but, having become spiritual, will be moved by the power of spirit. Neither will the soul thenceforth be harassed by any sins or pangs of remorse but enjoy forever the chief good, which is God. On the other hand, eternal death, of body as well as of soul, will seize the ungodly; they will have both an immortal body for everlasting torments and a
25 soul suffering perpetually from the goads of sins and without hope of forgiveness.¹¹⁷

Aulus Do you believe these things earnestly and conscientiously?

Barbatius So much, I tell you, that I'm more sure of them than I am that you're talking with me.

- 30 **Aulus** When I was at Rome, I did not find everyone so sincere in belief.¹¹⁸

Barbatius No, and if you look around you'll find many elsewhere, too, who aren't equally convinced of these matters.

Aulus Since you agree with us in so many and so difficult questions, what prevents you from being wholly on our side?

- 35 **Barbatius** I want to hear about that from you, for I think I'm orthodox.¹¹⁹ Even if I wouldn't vouch for my life, still I try diligently to make it correspond to what I profess.

Aulus Then why is there such conflict between you and the orthodox?

- Barbatius** Find out. But look here, doctor, if this prelude doesn't displease
40 you, take a bit of lunch with me, and after lunch ask me about everything at leisure. I'll show you both arms; you shall inspect both stool and urine.

Finally, you shall anatomize this whole heart, if you like, to make a more reliable diagnosis.

Aulus But my conscience troubles me about eating a meal with you.

Barbatius Yet doctors generally do this, the better to observe patients' cravings or faults.

Aulus But I fear that I might seem to favour heretics.

Barbatius On the contrary, nothing is more holy than to 'favour' heretics.¹²⁰

Aulus How so?

Barbatius Didn't Paul desire to be made anathema for the Jews,¹²¹ who were more than heretics? Doesn't one who tries to make a good man of a bad one, a living of a dead one, 'favour' him?

Aulus Of course.

Barbatius Favour me in the same way, then. You'll have nothing to fear.

Aulus I've never heard a sick man answer more pertinently. Well, lead on to the luncheon.¹²²

Barbatius You'll get a medical treat, as is proper when an invalid is host. We'll be so careful of our diet that our minds will be keen for argument.

Aulus Well, I hope we'll have birds of good omen.¹²³

Barbatius Oh, no: fish of bad odour – unless perhaps you've forgotten this is Friday.

Aulus But that's not part of our bargain.¹²⁴

NOTES

1 *saluta bene; Disticha Catonis*, Breves sententiae 9. On the *Disticha Catonis* see 'Patterns' n2.

It may not be permissible for Aulus to wish Barbatius well, ie *dicere salutem*, because *salutem* refers to the health of the soul as well as to that of the body and cannot properly be used in connection with anyone who is outside the communion of the church, such as a heretic or a person under the ban of excommunication or anathema. Barbatius has either been threatened with anathema or is already under the ban (line 10). If the latter, it would not be 'permissible' to greet him or to associate with him (431:3 below).

2 Ie sulphur, the fuel of the fires of hell

3 A bolt of excommunication, as, for example, in 'A Pilgrimage' 629:15; 'A Fish Diet' 696:30–1, 711:37; 'The Sermon' 952:18, 20; *Moriae encomium* LB IV 483E–484A / ASD IV-3 174:800–1 / CWE 27 139. Aulus alludes here to the papal bull *Exsurge Domine* of June 1520, condemning Luther and threatening excommunication and anathema if he did not recant. Luther responded by publicly burning the bull and the text of canon law (December 1520). As a result he was excommunicated by the bull *Decet Romanum pontificem*, issued in January 1521 but not published until the summer. Erasmus comments elsewhere on the severity of *Exsurge Domine*; see Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 79–81; text of *Exsurge*

- Domine* in Kidd Documents 75–9 no 38. Pliny *Naturalis historia* 35.177 states that thunderbolts smell like sulphur and that their light is sulphurous.
- 4 *Veioves*. Ovid *Fasti* 3.431–48 explains that *Veiovis* is the name of the young or little Jupiter, not yet armed with thunderbolts.
 - 5 From Pliny (*Naturalis historia* 2.113), who contrasts *bruta fulmina*, which are accidental and harmless, with those that come from the fire of the stars and are portentous. Cf *Adagia* II vii 90; *Parabola* CWE 23 243:10–12. Erasmus writes that papal bulls have sound and fury; but with learned men valid arguments, seeking to instruct rather than compel, and supported by testimony from Scripture, carry more weight (Allen Ep 1173:45–8 / CWE Ep 1173:52–6). *Exsurge Domine* backfired, for it strengthened Luther's resistance and won him more support in Germany.
 - 6 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.113
 - 7 An early observation of the electric spark, as Preserved Smith noted (*History of Modern Culture* 2 vols [New York 1930–4] I 64); and see 'A Fish Diet' 696:31–8.
 - 8 'Man can shut the doors of the temple against man; God alone can exclude from heaven' (*Explanatio symboli* LB V 1177F–1178A / ASD V-1 288:415–16).
 - 9 The pope
 - 10 The unmistakable irony of the optative subjunctive 'Utinam sit' was not lost on Erasmus' enemies, who accused him of casting doubts on papal powers. He retorted by blaming his critics for failure to notice that it is a man initially suspected of heresy who utters these words but in the end is cleared of the charge, since Aulus fails to find any heresy in this Lutheran sympathizer (Allen Ep 1858:538–50). In his reply to some Spanish detractors in 1528, Erasmus defends the passage at greater length (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1060A–F). As usual he insists that what was condemned in his writings was misunderstood by uninformed or prejudiced critics. Often he is at pains to remind readers that in a dialogue a speaker's words must fit his character and circumstances and not be attributed naively to the creator of the fiction. See Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 79–80.
 - 11 *excommunicatissimi*, a superlative apparently coined by Erasmus and typical of his lexical virtuosity. These lines imply a contrast between an incontestable separation and the sometimes questionable excommunications by pontiffs. So in *Explanatio symboli*: 'The person excommunicated may be within the church while the one who excommunicates is cut off from the church ... he who is dragged to the fire as a heretic may be a victim pleasing to God; those who have brought him there may themselves deserve burning' (LB V 1175B / ASD V-1 282:267–70).
 - 12 *palaestrites*. He may have to fight in himself the disease he tries to cure in another.
 - 13 *Adagia* II iv 12
 - 14 1 Cor 13:7
 - 15 'From heaven to earth'; *Adagia* II v 95
 - 16 The Apostles' Creed expounded by Barbatius is the received text of the Roman baptismal creed, the common formula of Western Christendom. Traditionally but inaccurately attributed to the apostles themselves, it had many minor variations in early forms, did not become fixed until the eighth century, and was not a part of the baptismal service until perhaps two centuries later. On

textual changes see Denzinger-Schönmetzer *Enchiridion* 17–29 nos 1–30; J. de Ghellinck *Patristique et moyen âge*, 3 vols (Paris 1946–8) 1 *Les recherches sur les origines du symbole des apôtres*; J.N.D. Kelly *Early Christian Creeds* (London and New York 1950). The text used by Erasmus is:

Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem, creatorem coeli et terrae, et in Iesum Christum Filium eius unicum, Dominum nostrum. Qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria Virgine, passus sub Pontio Pilato; crucifixus, mortuus, et sepultus est. Descendit ad inferos; tertia die resurrexit a mortuis; ascendit ad coelos; sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris omnipotentis; inde venturus iudicare vivos et mortuos. Credo in Spiritum Sanctum; Sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam; sanctorum communionem; peccatorum remissionem; carnis resurrectionem; et vitam aeternam. Amen (*Explanatio symboli* LB V 1138F–1139A / ASD V-1 214:263–215:270).

In his old age Erasmus published a second and longer work on the Apostles' Creed, *Explanatio symboli sive catechismus* (Basel 1533) LB V 1133A–1196E / ASD V-1 179–320 ed J.N. Bakhuizen van den Brink. It is an exposition of the articles by a priest to a young catechumen, not a conversation between two adult acquaintances. Dedicated to Thomas Boleyn, father of Anne Boleyn, it expands most of the topics treated summarily in the colloquy and allows us to test the consistency of Erasmus' pronouncements on the Creed, for *Explanatio symboli* was his last word on the subject. Minor differences can be found, since the two compositions were written for different purposes and the relationships between examiner and respondent in them are different, but interpretation of doctrine is basically the same. The later work does not allude to Luther or Lutheranism. An anonymous English translation, attributed to William Marshall, was issued in 1533 or 1534 (STC 10504); see Devereux 182. Erasmus wrote a brief versified paraphrase of the Apostles' Creed (1514); see CWE 85–6 92–107, 505–9 no 49 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 307 no 94.

Erasmus' reverence for the Creed is unambiguous (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 868D–870F). Except for the article on Christ's descent to hell, everything in the Creed is taken from Scripture (*Explanatio symboli* LB V 1161F–1162B / ASD V-1 258:546–68), and it is equal to the Gospels in truth and authority (LB IX 868D, 870F, and cf 'Youth' 99:11–12). But he doubted the apostolic authorship of the existing text. It is called 'the Apostles' Creed' because it has apostolic doctrine (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1080c) and the gravity and brevity of apostolic utterance, yet he is disposed to date it from the first Council of Nicaea (325). See *Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 92D / Holborn 211:12–27; *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1170A–B. On this question his views give him a place of some importance in the history of scholarly investigation of the Creed (F. Kattenbusch *Das apostolische Symbol* 2 vols [Leipzig 1894–1900] 1 4; de Ghellinck *Patristique et moyen âge* 1 21), though he may have been influenced by Valla (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1170A–C). See *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1080B–D; Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 77–8. His colloquy and *Explanatio symboli* never rivalled Luther's catechisms in popularity, but they offer many interesting comparisons with Luther's. For his part, Luther condemned the *Explanatio*; he thought it too difficult – as well he might – for a young catechumen, and that by raising unnecessary and dangerous

questions it would only encourage scepticism instead of strengthening belief. See Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 84–5.

Another version of the early church's creed, named and used in this dialogue, is the subject of an important *Expositio* or *Commentarius in symbolum apostolorum* by Rufinus of Aquileia, once the friend, later the foe, of Jerome. This commentary was even attributed by some to Jerome, by others to Cyprian. Erasmus denied it was by Cyprian, yet retains that traditional though erroneous attribution in his references to it (426:26, 429:10 and 15, 430:2 below). References to Rufinus in these notes will use the edition by M. Simonetti in CCL 20 (Tournhout 1961) 127–82, citing it by section and page numbers. Readers are warned that not all section numbers in CCL agree with those in other editions. An older edition is printed in PL 21 335–86. The English translation in NPNF 2nd series III is now superseded by that of J.N.D. Kelly. Kelly's *Early Christian Doctrines* is the best survey of Christian theology to the middle of the fifth century. For the history of ancient creeds see his *Early Christian Creeds*.

Rufinus expounds the creed used in the Aquileian church near the beginning of the fifth century and compares it with the Old Roman Creed, which he believed came ultimately from the apostles. Text:

Credo in Deo Patre omnipotente, invisibili et impassibili; et in Christo Iesu, unico Filio eius Domino nostro, qui natus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine, crucifixus sub Pontio Pilato, et sepultus; descendit in inferna; tertia die resurrexit a mortuis; ascendit in coelos; sedit ad dexteram Patris; inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos. Et in Spiritu Sancto; Sanctam Ecclesiam; remissionem peccatorum; huius carnis resurrectionem.

- 17 *symbolum*. One meaning of *symbolum* is 'watchword' or 'password' identifying a fellow soldier (as in Allen Ep 3041:39–40). If Barbatius betrays or misuses his *symbolum* he will prove to be in the ranks of the enemy. As 'sign' or 'seal,' signifying an enduring covenant or relationship, *symbolum* identified the affirmation of faith by an instructed catechumen whether youth or adult (cf *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1136D), or on behalf of an infant by priest or sponsors (as in 'The Godly Feast' 196:15). In the early church custom varied at different times and places. See Kelly *Rufinus* 101–2. For still other meanings of *symbolum* see n124 below.
- 18 On what belief entails see *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1143F–1144F / ASD V-1 224:554–226:618.
- 19 According to Rufinus some Eastern churches prefixed 'one' to 'God the Father' (*Expositio* 3–5 CCL 20 135, 137, 139 / Kelly *Rufinus* 33, 36). On 'almighty' (*omnipotentem*) see n23 below. The Aquileian Creed adds 'invisible and impassible' after 'almighty' (Rufinus *Expositio* 5 CCL 20 140 / Kelly *Rufinus* 37; n16 above [end]).
- 20 *condiderit* 'formed,' 'established.' See *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1141E; Erasmus thinks this verb is preferable here to *creavit* 'created' or *fecit* 'made' because it avoids difficulties about creation *ex nihilo* and is more consonant with Genesis (ibidem LB V 1147B–D / ASD V-1 230:742–231:770). The Septuagint in Genesis 1:1 has ἐποίησεν 'made'; the Vulgate *creavit*. See Augustine *De fide et symbolo* 4.5 PL 40 184; in *De civitate Dei*, God is said to be *auctor omnis conditorque naturae* (5.9 PL 41 151).
- 21 'A mind of infinite power, indivisible (*simplicissimam*), eternal, existent before all time, immutable' is one description (LB V 1151A in the long passage on

- God in *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1144F–1151D / ASD v-1 226:613–238:982). Cf *Hyperaspistes* I (1526) LB x 1294B–C, II (1527) LB x 1488B–C; *Ecclesiastes* LB v 1093A. Rufinus employs ‘substance’ instead of ‘mind’ (*Expositio* 4 CCL 20 137–8 / Kelly *Rufinus* 33–4). In *Ecclesiastes*, Erasmus’ definition runs: ‘We believe God is an incorporeal and indivisible substance, than which nothing is or could be greater or better’ (LB v 921B–C and see 1088A–1090D; cf *Explanatio symboli* 1146C–D).
- 22 Col 1:16. The phrase is in the Creed of Nicaea (325) and the ‘Nicene’ Creed, sometimes called the Creed of Constantinople (381), a partial revision of what was adopted in 325. On these see Kelly *Early Christian Doctrines* 231–7, 339–40; translations in *Documents of the Christian Church* selected and edited Henry Bettenson (London 1943; 2nd ed 1963) 35–7.
- 23 *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1146D–1147A / ASD v-1 229:709–230:729
- 24 See the stories in ‘Exorcism’ and in cwe Ep 143:70–255. On renouncing Satan see ‘The Godly Feast’ 196:15–16; *Ecclesiastes* LB v 890D–E.
- 25 On this article of the Creed see *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1151D–1158F / ASD v-1 238:982–252:385. *Ecclesiastes* LB v 1057B–1058F has a notable passage on the divine and human natures of Christ; and see *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB vi 867D–868F, 985C–991D; other references in Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 83. In his *Apologia adversus monachos* (1528) Erasmus cites lines 17–18 above as unambiguous evidence of his orthodoxy (LB ix 1026F–1027A, and cf Allen Ep 1877:77–83).
- 26 On the Sonship of Christ see *Ecclesiastes* LB v 772A–B; paraphrase on John 1:3 LB vii 499D–500C; and see *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* LB ix 271C–273C; *Apologia contra Stunicam* 315A–317D; *Apologia ad Caranzam* 404F–405D, 407D–409C, 414A–428E. For Rufinus see *Expositio* 6–7 CCL 20 141–4 / Kelly *Rufinus* 38–42; *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1142F–1143B, 1152E–1153A / ASD v-1 222:504–223:518, 240:42–241:67. On ‘through the Son,’ Col 1:12–23.
- 27 that is, of sovereignty] Added in the March 1533 edition. The Son is ‘true God,’ yet the Father is author and origin (*auctor et fons*) of all (*Modus orandi Deum* LB v 1115F / ASD v-1 146:861–6).
- 28 who is . . . itself] Added in the March 1533 edition. For the phrase ‘fountain-head of Deity’ see Rufinus *Expositio* 4 CCL 20 137–8 / Kelly *Rufinus* 34–5; *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1143C–E / ASD v-1 224:525–53; but see Leonard Hodgson *The Doctrine of the Trinity* (London 1943) 100–3.
- 29 a word for] Added in the March 1533 edition
- 30 but of God . . . Persons] Added in the March 1533 edition. Earlier editions have only ‘the Son is God, of God.’
- 31 ‘Whatever had no beginning is God’ (*Explanatio symboli* LB v 1139A, 1147D / ASD v-1 215:273, 231:766). See 428:30–41 and n89 below, and for other patristic distinctions Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* especially 85–6; Kelly *Rufinus* 38–42 and notes.
- 32 On ‘Persons’ (*hypostases, substantiae*) see *Ecclesiastes* LB v 1091C–F. When the Paris faculty of theology formally condemned the *Colloquies*, one of six passages in this colloquy censured was ‘Why . . . appropriate to the Father,’ for the reason that ‘the name “God” has no authority not equally appropriate to all Persons’ of the Trinity. Erasmus maintained that these lines are orthodox as they stand but were misunderstood (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB ix 943F–945B). They are supported by Hilary (*De Trinitate* 9.54–5 PL 10

- 324–7; *De synodis* 27.64, 69 PL 10 523–4, 526). But he suspects the printed text of the dialogue at this place is corrupt. See nn27–31 above, which show how the passage was expanded and clarified in the March 1533 edition (ASD I-3 366–7). Those changes, however, do not agree verbatim with what he says in LB IX 944D should have been printed, though they express the same thought. Other passages to which the Paris critics objected are noted at the appropriate places.
- 33 Jer 17:5
- 34 Matt 28:18
- 35 and things under the earth] Added in the September 1531 edition; Phil 2:10
- 36 *Adagia* I i 24
- 37 The Paris faculty of theology found error in lines 424:35–425:2, an objection Erasmus easily refutes (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 945C–D).
- 38 See nn25–32 above and *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1090D–F.
- 39 An essential distinction, for if Christ was a creature he had a beginning and ‘there was a time when the Son was not,’ an Arian doctrine. Orthodox confessions have ‘begotten, not made.’ As Erasmus remarks, patristic language was not uniformly consistent on this subject (Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 85–7; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1148D–F, 1157B / ASD V-1 232:811–234:1, 248:295–302; and see a note on Col 1:15–16 in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 885C–D).
- 40 As the Creed says (*unicum*). Another instance of precision about the uniqueness of the Son. ‘He is the unique offspring of a unique Father’ but ‘not separated from his begetter’ as the Arians wrongly supposed. See Rufinus *Expositio* 6 CCL 20 141–2 / Kelly *Rufinus* 38–9, 110–11; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1152D–E / ASD V-1 240:42–4.
- 41 ‘He is son by nature, we by adoption’ (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 772B). One is ‘adopted’ who was not previously a son, but ‘Christ was never not the Son of God.’ See *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1152C–1153E / ASD V-1 240:30–242:105; *Apologia ad Caranzam* (1522) LB IX 425E–428E; Rufinus *Expositio* 7–8 CCL 20 144 / Kelly *Rufinus* 41–2.
- 42 On the Virgin Birth see *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 5C–10E; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1154C–1158F / ASD V-1 243:142–252:385; Rufinus *Expositio* 9 CCL 20 146–7 / Kelly *Rufinus* 42–7. The conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Birth are dogmas not doubted by the church (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 1026E; *Hyperaspistes* I LB X 1305A–B). Whoever does not believe in the perpetual virginity of Mary must be considered both heretic and blasphemer (*Explanatio symboli* LB V 1155B–C / ASD V-1 245:189–96). Nevertheless Erasmus was criticized because in *Modus orandi Deum* (1524) he wrote that although the perpetual virginity must not be doubted, it cannot be proved from the Scriptures (LB V 1116C / ASD V-1 146:886–147:891). He deals with this censure in *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1084A–E. See also ‘The Philological Society’ n3.
- 43 Cf *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1152E / ASD V-1 240:44–7.
- 44 The appropriateness of such a birth is treated in *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1155E–1156D / ASD V-1 246:214–247:56; Erasmus then reviews some ancient Christological heresies LB V 1156C–1158F / ASD V-1 247:257–252:385.
- 45 In his *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass* the hero is turned into an ass.

- 46 A favourite theme of theologians and commentators since the earliest years of Christianity. See 'The Godly Feast' n117.
- 47 *vere*, emphasizing the actuality of the suffering. Such words in the ancient creeds are important as expressions of the early church's opposition to heretical notions of Docetists and Gnostics that Christ did not truly suffer. See *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1158F–1159A / ASD v-1 252:387–9.
- 48 Pilate's name is preserved in the record of Christ's crucifixion *ad maiorem historiae fidem*, as Erasmus says (*Explanatio symboli* LB v 1155A, 1159F / ASD v-1 244:175, 254:436–8; Rufinus *Expositio* 16 CCL 20 152–3), for Christianity is a historical religion. Cf Augustine *De fide et symbolo* 5.11 PL 40 187; S. Liberty 'The Importance of Pontius Pilate in Creed and Gospel' *Journal of Theological Studies* 45 (1944) 38–56.
- 49 'Suffered' (*passus*) is omitted here but is in the Apostles' Creed. It is not in the Aquileian version expounded by Rufinus, which does have 'crucified'; 'buried' (*sepultus*) is in both creeds (n16 above). On all these terms see *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1158F–1161E / ASD v-1 252:387–257:543; Rufinus *Expositio* 12–15 CCL 20 149–52.
- 50 1 Pet 1:19
- 51 Long before this colloquy was written Erasmus and Colet had debated the meaning of Christ's agony in Gethsemane. They differed about interpretation of 'Let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt' (Matt 26:39; Mark 14:36), which they discussed during Erasmus' first visit to England in 1499. Erasmus' side of the argument and much of Colet's are preserved in *De taedio Iesu* (LB v 1265A–1292A), printed in Erasmus' *Lucubratiunculae* (1503), and in Epp 108–11. Agreeing with scholastic opinions and against Jerome, Erasmus contended that Christ's agony was caused by human dread of approaching death, even though he was willing to die as a sacrifice (*De taedio Iesu* LB v 1269F–1270A). Rejecting such apprehension as incredible, because inappropriate to Christ, Colet argued that Matt 26:39 referred to the Jews and their guilt, that 'Let this cup pass from me' meant 'Let not my death be a cause of death to the Jews.' Erasmus contended that the passage had nothing to do with the Jews (Allen Ep 111:50–66 / CWE Ep 111:60–78). The theses of the two disputants are summarized in *De taedio Iesu* LB v 1265E–1266E. Neither was convinced by the other's arguments. More's judgment was that Erasmus' and Colet's theses were not mutually exclusive but that both contained truth. See his *De tristitia Christi* ed Clarence H. Miller (Yale CWM 14 part 1 47–61, part 2 1007–8).
- 52 The mysteries confronted in such questions must be approached by 'faith, not human reason' but are partially revealed by the right understanding of Scripture. See *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1159F–1160F / ASD v-1 254:439–256:494.
- 53 Col 3:1–2
- 54 Num 21:8–9. That the brazen serpent prefigured Christ crucified was an interpretation founded upon the words of Christ himself (John 3:14–15). See *Ecclesiastes* LB v 1043B; *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1180E / ASD v-1 293:562–4; *De praeparatione ad mortem* (1534) LB v 1312F / ASD v-1 380:13–16. Erasmus wrote a poem on the subject (CWE 85–6 56–7, 468–9 no 11 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 222 no 31).

- 55 Ps 96:10 (95:10 Vulg) except for 'from a tree.' This phrase (*a ligno*) is in the verse as quoted by Justin Martyr (*Apologia* 1 41 PG 6 391-2, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 73 PG 6 645-6), Tertullian (*Adversus Marcionem* 3.19 CSEL 47 408, *Adversus Iudaeos* 10 CSEL 70 305), and other Fathers, but is not now accepted as genuine; nor is it in the Septuagint or the Clementine text of the Vulgate.
- 56 On this phrase see J.C. Plümpe 'Vivum saxum, vivi lapides: The Concept of "Living Stone" in Classical and Christian Antiquity' *Traditio* 1 (1943) 1-14; V.-L. Saulnier 'Hommes pétrifiés et pierres vives (autour d'une formule de panurge)' *BHR* 22 (1960) 398. If taken in the most literal sense, 'living rock' seems an absurdity or antithesis. Nonetheless the phrase is established as a suggestive metaphor. Rocks do not 'live,' yet as Augustine says they 'have being' (*essentia*); they are *there*, they exist. For Christian writers the phrase is applicable to Christ or the church or the faith, as in Matt 16:18 and 1 Pet 2:4.
- 57 Erasmus means the exposition by Rufinus; see n16 above. Erasmus' edition of Cyprian (Basel 1520) includes this text, but it is placed there under works falsely ascribed to Cyprian, and Erasmus says the style shows that it is not the work of Cyprian. Yet even in *Explanatio symboli* he names Cyprian instead of Rufinus as the author (LB V 1141C, 1141D, 1141E, 1142A / ASD V-1 220:429, 434, 454), and see Allen Ep 1000:24-37 / CWE Ep 1000:25-39.
- 58 Rufinus (see preceding note) *Expositio* 12, 15-18, 26 CCL 20 149, 152-5, 160-1 / Kelly *Rufinus* 47, 52, 60-1; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1161F / ASD V-1 257:544-258:552. Rufinus *Expositio* 16 CCL 20 152-3 adds that 'descended to hell' in the Aquileian Creed means the same thing as 'buried,' but this is doubtful (Kelly *Rufinus* 52, 121).
- A clause on the descent to hell had been in credal language since the 'Dated Creed' of Sirmium in 359 (English translation in Bettenson *Documents of the Christian Church* [n22 above] 61-2, and see Kelly *Early Christian Creeds* 378-83 and his *Rufinus* 121 n98). The doctrine itself seems to derive from 1 Pet 3:18-20 and 4:6. Consult Kattenbusch *Das apostolische Symbol* (n16 above) 11 895ff; H. Quilliet 'Descent de Jésus aux enfers' in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* ed A. Vacant et al 15 vols (Paris 1903-50) IV-1 565-619; J.A. MacCulloch *The Harrowing of Hell* (Edinburgh 1930); J. Kroll *Gott und Hölle Studien der Bibliothek Warburg* 20 (Leipzig and Berlin 1932); R.V. Turner 'Descendit ad inferos: Medieval Views on Christ's Descent into Hell and the Salvation of the Ancient Just' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 27 (1966) 173-94; Dewey Wallace 'Puritan and Anglican: The Interpretation of Christ's Descent into Hell in Elizabethan Theology' *ARG* 69 (1978) 248-89. On the order of the articles about the descent and the resurrection Erasmus cites Thomas Aquinas; on this question consult *Explanatio symboli* ASD V-1 258:557n. Erasmus' opinions on the descent, other than those expressed in this colloquy, are found *ibidem* LB V 1161E-1163B / ASD V-1 257:545-260:620, where he considers the scriptural evidence, such as it is, and the significance of the descent; *Expositio in psalmum LXXXV* LB V 516E-517B, 540C-542E; and the paraphrase on 1 Pet 3:19 LB VII 1094B-D, 1096B-C. He wrote a poem on this theme (CWE 85-6 304-31, 668-87 no 112 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 190 no 21; text also in LB VIII 579B-84B).
- 59 Although versions of the Creed quoted by Tertullian do not include the descent to hell (*De virginibus velandis* 1 CSEL 76 79, *Adversus Praxean* 2 CSEL 47 229, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 13 CSEL 70 17-18), he acknowledges it in *De anima* 55 CSEL 20 388, where he says that before ascending to heaven Christ went *in inferioria terrarum* to inform the patriarchs and prophets about himself.

- Tertullian holds that the patriarchs and prophets were not at once translated to paradise, for only Christian martyrs are there; other Christians await in the underworld the judgment of the Last Day (*De anima* 55 CSEL 20 387–9; cf *De resurrectione carnis* 43 CSEL 47 88–9). Erasmus believes Christ announced to the ‘spirits in prison’ that they should now receive their just rewards for their good or wicked deeds (*Expositio in psalmum LXXXV* LB V 540C–E; Paraphrase on 1 Peter LB VII 1094B–D); other references in Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 91.
- 60 Absence of this article in Eastern versions of the Creed earlier than the Aquileian was due, Erasmus believed, to the reluctance of early Christians to include anything in the Apostles’ Creed that was not explicitly attested in Scripture. He himself accepts it because the universal church receives it (*Explanatio symboli* LB V 1162F–1163A / ASD V-1 260:600–20), and because it agrees with Old and New Testament texts, as Barbatius points out in this answer. Those texts may not be proofs, but they ought to persuade Christians. On other contemporary judgments (Luther’s and Calvin’s) see Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 92.
- 61 Ps 16:10 (15:10 Vulg)
- 62 Ps 30:3 (29:3 Vulg)
- 63 1 Pet 3:18–19
- 64 Erasmus notes that although some have thought the soul of Christ experienced the pains of hell, the church rejects such interpretation (*Expositio in psalmum LXXXV* LB V 541C–D). Calvin, on the contrary, regards it as necessary (ICR 2.16.10–11).
- 65 Rom 6:2, 4, and see ‘The Godly Feast’ 196:13–19 and n229.
- 66 But, when resurrected, a ‘spiritual body,’ as Augustine insists (*De fide et symbolo* 6.13 PL 40 187–8). For Erasmus’ statement of this perplexing but (to him) essential doctrine see *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1163B / ASD V-1 260:618–20. In addition to the testimony of the Gospels, 1 Cor 15:35–58 provided the proof-text.
- 67 *revixerit*. Omission here of ‘on the third day’ is not significant; the phrase is quoted in *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1163B–C / ASD V-1 260:621. Erasmus argued with his friend Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples, the French reformer, as to whether the Greek text of Mark 8:31 and Matt 27:63 meant that Christ rose ‘after three days’ in the tomb or, as Erasmus contended, ‘on the third day’ (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 183F–185E). He resented Lefèvre d’Etaples’ intemperate reaction to his interpretation and stood his ground. See Allen Epp 766:22–37, 778:197–221 / CWE Epp 766:26–43 and 26n, 778:220–46. Erasmus’ opinion supported the tradition that Christ’s crucifixion occurred on Friday and his resurrection on the Sunday.
- 68 *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1163F–1164B / ASD V-1 262:657–673; Rufinus *Expositio* 27, 29–32 CCL 20 161, 164–9 / Kelly *Rufinus* 62–7
- 69 Such relics as these are specified in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 118E; all of them were well known in Erasmus’ time. He writes on the Virgin’s milk in ‘A Pilgrimage’; see 632:12–636:21 and nn71, 74, 94. The wonderful powers of a Franciscan cowl furnish the theme of one of the later colloquies, ‘The Seraphic Funeral.’
- 70 The appropriateness of this metaphorical phrase to convey a theological truth is justified by biblical texts in *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1164B–F / ASD V-1 262:676–263:711. Cf Rufinus *Expositio* 29–30 CCL 20 164–6 / Kelly *Rufinus* 68–9.
- 71 Acts 7:55–6

- 72 Rufinus *Expositio* 31–2 CCL 20 166–9 / Kelly Rufinus 68–70; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1164F–1166D / ASD V-1 263:711–266:796. See Matt 24:36.
- 73 As the New Testament often claims, sometimes by the words of Christ himself; for example Luke 4:21, 18:31–4, 24:25–7
- 74 Matt 16:27; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1165A / ASD V-1 264:716–18
- 75 Barbarians, as in Col 3:11; cf *Adagia* II iii 17, 35, III v 94.
- 76 1 Cor 15:51–2; 1 Thess 4:16–17; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1165A / ASD V-1 264:719–22
- 77 When the young catechumen in *Explanatio symboli* wonders whether there will be room for all who have lived and died since the beginning of history to stand before the judgment seat, he is told that the assertion must be taken figuratively. Such passages in Scripture are accommodated to the limitations of human understanding (LB V 1165E / ASD V-1 264:753–8).
- 78 See 430:13–26 below.
- 79 Matt 24:36; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1165B / ASD V-1 264:723–7
- 80 *morbi*. *Morbus* is ‘sickness,’ ‘malady,’ whether of mind or body. The word is apt here if we recall that Aulus and Barbatius had agreed (423:1–2 above) that this examination would be like that of patient by physician.
- 81 The principal sections of *Explanatio symboli* on the Holy Spirit and attendant questions about the Persons of the Trinity are LB V 1139A–C, 1142F–1143F, 1166D–1169E / ASD V-1 215:272–216:293, 222:504–224:553, 266:796–272:967; in Rufinus *Expositio* 33 CCL 20 169; and see *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1091A–F. Erasmus translated three tracts by Athanasius on the Holy Spirit and Basil’s *De spiritu sancto* (LB VIII 329A–335F, 397F–424A; 493A–534F). To have charity, faith, and other fruits of the Spirit is necessary for salvation; to comprehend the distinctions of the three Persons is not. ‘If I believe, as has been handed down, that the three are of one nature, what is the need of laboured disputation? If I do not believe, no human reasons will convince me.’ So Erasmus writes in a typical passage on the perils of *curiositas* and *definiendi temeritas* (Allen Ep 1334:173–231 / CWE Ep 1334:173–231). Some of his assertions about the Trinity, including those in this prefatory letter to his edition of Hilary (1523), were attacked more than once. For his answers see, in LB IX, *Apologiae contra Stunicam* 309C–311C, *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* 943F–945B, *Apologia adversus monachos* 1023B–1054A, *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* 1172A–1176D; in LB X, *Adversus calumniosissimam epistolam Martini Lutheri* 1541D–1543A. His prayer to the Holy Spirit is in LB V 1199F–1200A.
- 82 This sentence is explained further at lines 30–41. It is one of the passages Erasmus quotes as evidence of unimpeachable orthodoxy when defending himself against censure by Spanish monks (Allen Ep 1877:77–83; *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1026F–1027A); cf n25 above. Ep 1877 is addressed to Alonso Manrique, archbishop of Seville and inquisitor-general.
- 83 Expanded in lines 18–19.
- 84 John 3:8
- 85 See n82 above.
- 86 *De Trinitate* 2.29, 12.55–6 PL 10 69–70, 463–71 (English translation in NPNF 2nd series IX); Erasmus *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1169C / ASD V-1 271:946–53
- 87 ‘We dare to call the Holy Spirit true God, proceeding from the Father and the Son, which the ancients did not dare to do’ because of their unwillingness to

make such assertions if these words were not clearly present in Scripture. See Allen Ep 1334:404–56 / *cwe* Ep 1334:430–87. The ‘Macedonian’ heresy, condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 381, denied the full divinity of the Holy Spirit; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1166D–1167E / ASD V-1 266:796–268:857. Whether the Holy Spirit ‘proceeded’ from the Son as well as the Father caused prolonged controversy among patristic theologians and a lasting break between the Eastern and Western churches. Arians rejected the ‘double procession’ as it was called, in so far as it made the Son ‘consubstantial’ with the Father. They held that the Spirit proceeded from the Father alone *through* the Son but not *from* both Father and Son. Nevertheless the doctrine of the double procession was endorsed by the Council of Constantinople in 381. Later the ‘Athanasian’ Creed (late fourth or early fifth century) affirmed that the Spirit is ‘from the Father and the Son: not made or created or begotten but proceeding.’ See Kelly *Early Christian Doctrines* chapter 10. The ‘*filioque* clause’ was argued again at the Council of Florence in 1439, but no acceptable agreement between East and West was achieved. The differences still await final resolution. Erasmus’ introduction to Hilary (1523), Ep 1334, makes his own position clear. He accepts the doctrine of the church as formulated by the insights of Basil, Athanasius, and other great theologians of the Nicene era, while ever mindful of the incapacity of language to express adequately the complexities of dogma. ‘The sum and substance of our religion is peace and concord. This can hardly remain the case unless we define as few matters as possible and leave each individual’s judgment free on many questions’ (Allen Ep 1334:216–18 / *cwe* Ep 1334:232–4); cf *Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 110A / Holborn 245:33). The Sorbonne theologians found lines 428:26–9 ‘erroneous’ because, they said, absence of the title ‘Son’ in scriptural references to the Holy Spirit is not the only reason the Spirit cannot be called Son. Erasmus replied that neither does Hilary give any other reason (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 945E–946A; see n32 above).

- 88 Why ... three Persons.] Slight changes and additions were made in lines 30–1 (‘Why ... are’) in earlier editions, but the passage ‘and the fountain-head ... three Persons’ (lines 31–41) was not added until the March 1533 edition (see textual note in ASD I-3 371).
- 89 On these phrases see 424:29–34 above with the notes. ‘Author’ is intended as a precise and emphatic theological term, but in English the word does not carry the force of the Latin. Erasmus means here by *auctor* God as *solum principium sine principio* ‘the beginning without beginning’ (Allen Epp 2045:295–322, 2466:195–202; *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 944A–945B). When he wrote that God is ‘author of all that are’ (*auctor omnium quae sunt*) he meant, he said later, ‘even including the two divine Persons,’ that is, Son and Holy Spirit (Allen Ep 2466:196–7). For God is the ‘fountain-head of the whole Deity.’ Cf ‘The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*’ 1108:31–1109:3.
- 90 Elsewhere Erasmus makes clear that he thinks the word ‘author’ preferable to ‘creator,’ ‘maker,’ or ‘cause’ (Allen Epp 2045:295–322, 2466:195–202; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1145F, 1147A–C / ASD V-1 228:664–7, 230:730–59). See n20 above.
- 91 *originis ratio*. ‘Ultimate causality’ might be better but is avoided in the translation in deference to Erasmus’ dislike of ‘cause’ in this context. See preceding note.

- 92 So *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 944C, where Erasmus adds that although the name 'God' is common to the three Persons, in Scripture it usually signifies the Father
- 93 For Erasmus' conception of the church see *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1169E–1171D / ASD V-1 272:968–274:64.
- 94 The metaphor is Pauline (1 Cor 12:27; Col 1:18, 24). In the early church it sometimes signified the Eucharist; later the church as the community of baptized Christians: 'Where the Spirit of God is, there is the church' (Irenaeus *Adversus haereses* 3.24.1 PG 7 966). The church is not the priests and bishops but the whole Christian people. 'I describe the church as the consensus of all Christian people' (Allen Ep 1893:59–60; cf Ep 1729:26–7). Cf *Adagia* III iii 1 LB II 775E–F, IV i 1 LB II 960B, 966C–D, IV vii 96; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1071D–E.
- 95 *congregatio*. In *Explanatio symboli* Erasmus uses *societas* also but believes the best word, on both etymological and historical grounds, is *ecclesia* (LB V 1170A–E / ASD V-1 272:982–273:20).
- 96 424:1–2 above
- 97 Avoidance of prefixing 'in' to 'the holy church' was a legacy from Rufinus (*Expositio* 33–7 CCL 20 169–74 / Kelly *Rufinus* 135), we are told in the next two lines (and see my edition of *Inquisitio de fide* 99), but here as elsewhere in this colloquy Cyprian is named instead of Rufinus. The objection to 'in' before 'the holy church,' 'the remission of sins,' and 'the resurrection of the flesh' was that use of the preposition would give the same authority to those articles, which deal with creatures and mysteries, as to Deity (God, Son, Holy Spirit). Erasmus comments on Rufinus' treatment of this subject in *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1142B–D, 1145A–B / ASD V-1 221:459–222:480, 226:618–635. See Kattenbusch *Das apostolische Symbol* (n16 above) II 481–5 and Kelly *Rufinus* 135–6. When rebuked by the Paris faculty of theology for lines 429:1–13, Erasmus retorted that the responsibility was Rufinus', adding that he himself does not altogether approve of the argument made for omitting 'in,' because sometimes this kind of discrimination is not a matter of theological precision but of idiomatic usage in a particular language (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 946B and the references to *Explanatio symboli* in the preceding paragraph). Still, there is nothing unorthodox in omitting the preposition, as Rufinus prefers; after all, Augustine, Aquinas, and other Doctors of the church agree on this. See *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 946A–D, a passage added in the second edition of *Declarationes* (Allen Ep 2671:8n). The text of Thomas Aquinas he may have in mind is *Summa theologiae* II–II q 2 art 2, where Augustine is cited. Omission of 'in' had much support in theological tradition and in sixteenth-century writings. Calvin favoured omission and has a judicious comment on the question (1CR 4.1.2). The catechism of the Council of Trent likewise approved (in its concluding paragraph on the article 'I believe the holy Catholic church'). Erasmus remarks (*Explanatio symboli* LB V 1142B / ASD V-1 221:464–7) that the Aquileian Creed treated by Rufinus also omits 'Catholic' from 'holy church,' as did the version of the creed expounded by Augustine, but Augustine adds it as interpretation of 'holy church' (*De fide et symbolo* 10.21 PL 40 193).
- 98 In the first edition (March 1524) *ecclesia vero*; changed in the March 1529 edition to *ecclesia vera*; finally in the September 1531 edition to *ecclesia vera proprie dicta*.

- 99 Erasmus' affirmation that the church properly so called consists only of the good (also in *Spongia* LB x 1654E) troubled the Paris faculty. Why did he write that when he acknowledges that the good can change to bad? Because, he answers, the good who become bad are no longer truly *in* the church, though they may still be *of* it, still 'relate' to it (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 947A–D). He blames his critics for not taking into account the phrase *proprie dicta*, but they had not seen it, for their work was completed before the phrase was added to Erasmus' text in the September 1531 edition; their *determinatio* was published in July of that year. See J.-P. Massaut 'Erasme, la Sorbonne et la nature de l'église' in *Colloquium Erasmianum* 89–116, a valuable analysis of Erasmus' differences with the Paris theologians. Erasmus' replies to their criticisms of this colloquy constitute an important statement of his position on the church. Massaut shows that orthodox opinions support Erasmus rather than his academic opponents in this quarrel, despite a few inconsistencies on his part – for example, Erasmus says 'the church militant properly so called consists of the predestined, whom God alone knows' (ibidem LB IX 947C), a proposition condemned by the Council of Constance in 1418 (Denzinger-Schönmetzer *Enchiridion* 322 no 1201) and incompatible with what Erasmus implies elsewhere (see n108 below). However, his errors are less serious than those of his opponents (Massaut 112).
- 100 In *Explanatio symboli* Erasmus says that modern theologians interpret this article to mean the exultant company of the sanctified in heaven, or the prayers of the church, which benefit its members, or the sacraments, specifically the Eucharist. All these interpretations are correct, provided we realize that the blessings of the communion of saints come from Christ, who is the head of the church (LB v 1174C–E / ASD v-1 280:224–282:246). For references to Luther's and Calvin's conceptions see Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 101; for Hus' see *De simonia* 6, in *Advocates of Reform: From Wyclif to Erasmus* ed Matthew Spinka (Philadelphia 1953) 241.
- 101 That is, Rufinus (n16 above). Nor, as Erasmus remarks in *Explanatio symboli*, is this article 'the communion of saints' mentioned by Augustine (*De fide et symbolo*); LB v 1140A, 1174C / ASD v-1 217:339–44, 280:225.
- 102 Rufinus *Expositio* 39–45 CCL 20 175–81 / Kelly *Rufinus* 78–86, 149–50. On 'this flesh' in the Aquileian Creed, see n114 below.
- 103 *Ie* on the communion of saints
- 104 *Ie* 'the holy church.' These two articles are in apposition (*Explanatio symboli* LB v 1140A / ASD v-1 217:340–1).
- 105 On the sacraments see *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1175D–1178A / ASD v-1 283:286–288:423.
- 106 Spiritual gifts, especially charity, and consequent moral virtues; 1 Corinthians 12
- 107 1 Cor 12:27: 'Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.'
- 108 *Explanatio symboli* opens with the same warning: 'Outside the house of God none can hope for eternal salvation' (LB v 1133A / ASD v-1 1–3). The famous maxim 'Nulla salus extra ecclesiam' was a variation of 'Salus extra ecclesiam non est' in Cyprian *Epistolae* 73.21 *Ad Iubaianum* CSEL 3 part 2 795. See Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 101.

Originally a pronouncement directed against heretics, the maxim was widely used. The church, declared Jerome, is the ark of Noah: whoever is not within it when the Flood prevails will be lost (Ep 15.2 PL 22 355). How does this dictum apply, if at all, to the famous 'St Socrates' passage in 'The Godly Feast' 192:9–194:36 and to the present lines?

The fate of righteous pagans obedient to natural law, believing in a higher power, a future life and judgment, yet invincibly ignorant of the Christian gospel, was a hard but unavoidable question pondered by Christian writers, not all of them apologists or theologians, in every era of the church's history – Justin Martyr, Augustine, Aquinas, Dante, to name a few. For a review of approaches and attempted solutions of the problem see the excursus in Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 101–21, where it is argued that the confident hope of Erasmus' speaker in 'The Godly Feast' is not an aberration but is permissible, far from unprecedented, and even orthodox. Proof-texts could be adduced on both sides of this question; for example John 14:6 as against Mark 9:40 and John 10:16. Arguments pro and contra from other sources, ecclesiastical or historical, could be found or devised. The supposition that by divine grace truly virtuous pagans who were invincibly ignorant yet believed implicitly or 'by desire' what they could not know, was an allowable as well as charitable judgment that appealed to Erasmus and many others. See, besides 'The Godly Feast,' *Paraclesis* LB V 141F–142B or VI *4 recto; *Epistola de philosophia evangelica* LB VI *4 verso; *Hyperaspistes* I LB X 1294B–D and II LB X 1488B–D; and Allen Ep 1390:50–85 / CWE Ep 1390: 55–93 on Cicero. (To the references in *Inquisitio de fide* 101–21 in the 1950 and 1975 editions, and pages 127–32 in the 1975 edition, may be added Cindy L. Vitto *The Virtuous Pagan in Middle English Literature*: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 79 part 5 [Philadelphia 1989].)

With respect to the possibility of salvation for virtuous pagans who did not or do not or cannot know Christ's teachings, definitive pronouncement was finally made in *Lumen gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church promulgated by Vatican Council II in 1964, chapter 2 article 16: 'Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does divine Providence deny the help necessary for the salvation of those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, but who strive to live a good life, thanks to His grace. Whatever goodness or truth is found among them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the gospel. She regards such qualities as given by Him who enlightens all men so that they may finally have life' (text in *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche* second and enlarged edition, supplement: *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil* [Freiburg, Basel, Vienna 1966–8] I 204–5; translation in *The Documents of Vatican II* ed Walter M. Abbott [New York 1966] 35).

In this colloquy, however, Erasmus is less concerned with virtuous pagans than with persons living in later and ostensibly Christian societies. Here *nulla salus extra ecclesiam* is invoked against those who deliberately reject the fundamental beliefs of the church, and by impenitently doing so risk damnation and imperil the souls of others. The criterion of orthodoxy in the colloquy is the Apostles' Creed, expounded with some borrowings from other ancient creeds (Nicaea,

Constantinople, Aquileia) to clarify certain articles. Barbatius, the suspected Lutheran, passes the examination, as his initially hostile inquisitor Aulus concedes. See Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 38–49.

Yet, even though no heretic, Luther was clearly a schismatic. He had been excommunicated and was therefore in a formal sense *extra ecclesiam* for nearly three years before this dialogue was printed. Was he then beyond hope of salvation? ‘The only possible way out,’ writes Professor Bainton, ‘was to say that the Roman Church was not that Church outside of which no one can be saved. Erasmus took the step.’ The evidence is Erasmus’ definition of the church as a ‘community of all persons throughout the world who agree in the gospel faith, who worship one God the Father, who place their whole trust in his Son, who are guided by the same Spirit proceeding from him . . . the profession of one God, one gospel, one faith, one hope; the participation in the same Spirit and the same sacraments’ (lines 5–7, 21–2). ‘The greatest radicalism of the *Inquisitio* lies in its definition of the Church, which is not equated with the Church of Rome. A schismatic from the Roman Church is not outside of the ark’ (R.H. Bainton in Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* [1975] ix, and see Bainton’s review of Georg Gebhardt *Die Stellung des Erasmus von Rotterdam zur Römischen Kirche* [Marburg 1906] in ARG 59 [1968] 249–50 and his *Erasmus of Christendom* 193–4). Whether this radicalism was later modified or revised in any respect by Erasmus is debatable; see H.J. McSorley ‘Erasmus and the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff: Between Conciliarism and Papalism’ ARG 65 (1974) 37–53. But he never retracted what he wrote in this colloquy.

- 109 The Paris critics accused Erasmus of failing to say that in some circumstances baptism can be valid even when received in the church of heretics (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 947D–F). This question, disputed in the Donatist controversies (early fourth century), was settled by the Council of Arles in 314. See *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1176E–1178A / ASD V-1 285:353–288:422.
- 110 In line 30 *poenitentia* means acts of penance. In line 33 it refers to the discipline or sacrament of penance, which is closely connected in this context with baptism. See *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1176F–1177A / ASD V-1 286:362–3.
- 111 The Petrine authority, symbolized by Christ’s words to Peter in Matt 16:18–19. Erasmus has much to say about questions of discipline and authority but very little about the keys in his *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum*. Cf ‘A Fish Diet’ 689:27–691:1.
- 112 *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1178A–1179C / ASD V-1 288:423–290:490; Rufinus *Expositio* 39–45 CCL 20 175–81. Erasmus defends his interpretation of 1 Cor 15:51–2 (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 740F–743F) in a reply to Baechem (*Apologia de loco ‘Omnes quidem’* LB IX 433A–442B; on Baechem see ‘Rash Vows’ n14). He emphasizes the resurrection of the body, though he is well aware that ‘myriads’ of professing Christians doubt or deny it (*Exomologesis* LB V 160D–E). He says one pope, whom he does not name, forbade sermons on it (*Hyperaspistes* I LB X 1276B), perhaps because the subject was too difficult to be edifying. For like reasons the Council of Trent advised against public discourses on purgatory (session 25 [1563] Decree on purgatory; Tanner II 774). What theologians sometimes discuss in private may be unsuitable for public airing (Allen Ep 1167:167 / CWE Ep 1167:185–7).
- 113 All articles of the Creed are to be firmly believed, but this one is the most comforting to the godly in their afflictions. It is the foundation and sum of the

- faith (*Explanatio symboli* LB V 1178B / ASD V-1 288:432-3; Allen Epp 916:275-6, 1126:181-3 / CWE Epp 916:312-14, 1126:199-201).
- 114 Erasmus insists upon this. He cannot explain it; understanding of it is not essential; he is content to believe it (Allen Ep 1039:255-60 / CWE Ep 1039:273-8). Our bodies will be spiritualized, *corpora spiritualia* according to 1 Cor 15:44 (*Explanatio symboli* LB V 1178C-D, 1179A / ASD V-1 288:434-49, 290:475-6; Rufinus as in n102 above). The importance of a passage at the climax of *Moriae encomium* on resurrection of the body (LB IV 502E-504A / ASD IV-3 192:241-194:267 / CWE 27 152) has been overlooked by most commentators, but see M.A. Screech *Ecstasy and 'The Praise of Folly'* (London 1980) 173-5. On the difficulties of the doctrine and some patristic interpretations see, besides the references in Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 122-4, R.M. Grant *Miracle and Natural Law* (Amsterdam 1952) 221-63; J.G. Davies 'Factors Leading to the Emergence of Belief in the Resurrection of the Flesh' *Journal of Theological Studies* new series 23 (1972) 448-55; Kelly *Early Christian Doctrines* 470-9. The resurrection of the body and how 'body' was to be understood were unavoidable issues in ancient controversies with the Gnostics.
- 115 Rufinus *Expositio* 43-5 CCL 20 179-81 / Kelly *Rufinus* 83-6
- 116 Rom 8:17
- 117 Barbatius' answer is restated with some elaboration in *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1178E-1179B / ASD V-1 289:455-290:480; cf Rufinus *Expositio* 38 CCL 20 174 / Kelly *Rufinus* 77-8. 'Immortality' for the wicked is more properly called eternal death (LB V 1178E). Greatly though he admired the learning and piety of Origen, who doubted and at times rejected the doctrine of eternal punishment (*De principiis* 1.6.3, 3.6.6 PG 11 168-9, 338-40), Erasmus could not accept his idea of ultimate universal salvation. Because he had written in *Enchiridion* that the punishments of hell are no other than the perpetual anguish of mind that accompanies the habit of sinning (LB V 56C-D / Holborn 120:7-10 / CWE 66 113; and cf Origen *De principiis* 2.10.4 PG 11 236-7), Erasmus was accused of denying that hell-fire is real and eternal. He in turn accuses his critics of misunderstanding the passage in *Enchiridion*; it is not unscriptural. Hell-fire (as in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16) can be interpreted figuratively (*Supputatio* LB IX 699A-700E; *Apologia adversus monachos* ibidem 1091D-1092A). But whether material or not, the torments of hell are real and eternal; that is all we know and all we need to know. In *Moriae encomium* Folly laughs at divines who pretend to know all the details of hell (LB IV 469B-C / ASD IV-3 158:504-6 / CWE 27 130). What it might be like, if described imaginatively for homiletic purposes, is told in *Expositio in psalmum LXXXV* LB V 541A-C. On Origenian ideas in *Enchiridion* see A. Godin 'The *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*: The Modes of an Origenian Appropriation' *ERSY* 2 (1982) 47-79.
- 118 See 'Rash Vows' 38:24-7; 'Benefices' 47:22-7 and n10, 'The Young Man and the Harlot' 384:29-35 and n18. Late in life Erasmus recalled hearing 'abominable blasphemy' uttered by some in Rome and tales about similar shocking speech from the lips of papal priests during mass (Allen Ep 2465:470-7). Luther's disillusionment on his visit to Rome in 1510 is often related.
- 119 See n108 above (last three paragraphs of the note).
- 120 Certain Spanish critics, monks, were angered by the lines about favouring heretics and Barbatius' reply that nothing is more holy than to do so (*Apologia*

adversus monachos LB IX 1060A–F and n10 above). This was the sort of ambiguous assertion whose nuances were sure to be misunderstood by hasty or suspicious readers. In a letter (August 1527) to an English friend Erasmus scornfully rejects the criticism. No one, he says, who is really a heretic admits to the accusation. If Erasmus' detractors had looked at the preceding lines about doctor and patient, the passage would have been clear to them. Moreover, had they taken the trouble to ponder the allusion to Paul, they would or should have known that Erasmus' meaning was quite orthodox (Allen Ep 1858:386–405). Much earlier, in a memorable letter to Albert of Brandenburg (October 1519), he had written, 'it is . . . my Christian duty to support Luther to this extent: if he is innocent, I should be sorry to see him overwhelmed by some villainous faction; if he is wrong, I would rather he were set right than destroyed; for this agrees better with the example Christ has given us' (Allen Ep 1033:64–7 / CWE Ep 1033:72–6).

On his troubled relations with his Spanish detractors see Erasmus' *Apologia adversus articulos per monachos in Hispaniis exhibitos* LB X 1015–94; Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 80; and Bataillon *Erasme et l'Espagne*.

121 Rom 9:3

122 Since the later Middle Ages the excommunicated were regarded as either *tolerati* or *vitandi* (to be shunned). Aulus, the inquisitor in this dialogue, was uncertain at first how he should treat Barbatius. By the end of their conversation he is inclined to think him no heretic and, even if already excommunicated, certainly *tolerandus*. Cf n1 above.

123 *Adagia* I i 75

124 *praeter symbolum nostrum*. Here *symbolum* is taken to mean the same as *symbola*, 'one's share of the expense' or 'contribution to a feast.' Cf Gellius 7.13.2 and *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1136E–1137A.

THE OLD MEN'S CHAT, OR THE CARRIAGE

Γερωντολογία, sive "Οχημα

First printed in the March 1524 edition. Some editions have *Senile colloquium* as a running title.

The device of bringing elderly men together to examine, with the help of their reminiscences, the variety of human experience and values is ancient and familiar, but Erasmus' dialogue has a modern ring too, because this is a reunion of friends who were university students at the same time. We do not know if they resemble graduates he may have known in Paris or elsewhere; nor does it matter, for their counterparts are found in every community. (For Erasmus' own university years in Paris see Epp 43–85 passim and 'A Fish Diet' 715:16–717:4 with the notes.)

What we have here is a kind of morality play in which acceptable and in many ways admirable lives are contrasted with others that have been partially misused or largely wasted by frivolity or excess. In 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' Erasmus calls attention to the moral profit of this dialogue, which provides the young with good examples to follow and bad ones to shun. Socrates claimed to have brought philosophy down from heaven to earth; 'I,' says Erasmus, 'have brought it even into games, informal conversations, and drinking parties' (1102:40–1103:4).

The self-portraiture of the four speakers is not equally revealing, but all are delineated sharply enough to emerge as individuals, as well as types of virtues or vices. They are somewhat like the characters in Theophrastus or, in the seventeenth century, in Earle, Overbury, or Fuller. Glycion ('agreeable,' 'delightful') is a decent, proper Christian who in practical affairs observes the Horatian mean and exemplifies common sense. On marriage, careers, study, happiness, and death his opinions are consistently like Erasmus' own; nowhere do we find a better illustration of the Erasmian prescription for a good life. Eusebius ('dutiful,' 'pious') is a churchman whose life has been correct but untouched by deep religious feeling, or so we surmise; in that respect he is unlike the Eusebius of 'The Godly Feast.' A prebend came his way and he took it. The amusing Polygamus ('much married') and Pampirus ('Jack-of-all-trades') are plainly intended as warnings to ingenuous youth. In some ways Pampirus is the most interesting of the four friends. His story of how he knocked about the world, joining one religious order after another and living by his wits much of the time, reminds one of Till Eulenspiegel. As a precursor of many later adventurers and rogues in the pages of Nashe, Greene, Dekker, and the picaresque novel, he is well worth knowing.

The unexpected epilogue of the carriers is a happy dramatic touch. They too recall characters we have met elsewhere: the carriers in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV* 2.1.

A Spanish translation was printed in 1528; the translator's identity is uncertain. See Bataillon *Erasme et l'Espagne* xxix, 314–17, 321n, 689.

EUSEBIUS, PAMPIRUS,¹ POLYGAMUS, GLYCION
[HUGH, HARRY carriers]

Eusebius What strange birds² do I behold here? Unless my mind's playing tricks on me or my sight's failing,³ I see three old cronies of mine, Pampirus, Polygamus, and Glycion, sitting together. Yes, that's who they are.

Pampirus What are you up to with your glass eyes,⁴ you sorcerer?⁵ Come over here, Eusebius.

Polygamus Greetings, Eusebius, whom I've wanted so much to see!

10 **Glycion** The best to you, my dear fellow!

Eusebius Greetings to you all at once; you're friends equally dear to me.

What god, or chance more blessed than a god, has brought us together?

None of us has laid eyes on the other for forty years now, I suppose.

Mercury with his wand⁶ couldn't have united us better. What are you doing

15 here?

Pampirus Sitting.

Eusebius I see; but why?

Polygamus We're waiting for the cart⁷ that's to take us to Antwerp.

Eusebius To the fair?

20 **Polygamus** Yes, but as sightseers rather than traders,⁸ though we each have different errands there.

Eusebius I'm on my way there, too. But what's holding you up?

Polygamus We haven't struck a bargain with the carriers yet.

Eusebius A set of rascals!⁹ But shall we fool them?

25 **Polygamus** We'd be glad to if we could.

Eusebius Let's pretend we prefer to walk together.

Polygamus They'd sooner believe crabs will fly¹⁰ than that such old fellows will make the journey on foot.

Glycion Want some good, honest advice?

30 **Polygamus** Of course.

Glycion They're drinking. The longer they do this, the more danger of their upsetting us in the mire somewhere.

Polygamus You'll have to come very early in the morning if you want a sober carrier.¹¹

Glycion To reach Antwerp the sooner, let's hire a carriage just for us four.¹² We needn't worry about so slight an expense, I'd say; the advantages will more than make up for the cost. We'll have more comfortable seats and we'll make the trip enjoyable by exchanging stories.

- 5 **Polygamus** Glycion's right: good company in the vehicle is as important as the vehicle itself.¹³ Yes, and as the Greek proverb has it, we'll talk more freely, not *from* a wagon but *in* one.¹⁴

- Glycion** I've made the arrangements; all aboard! Well! It's good to be alive
10 now, when I've had the luck of seeing my dear old friends after so long an interval.

Eusebius And I think I'm growing young again.

Polygamus How many years do you reckon it's been since we lived together in Paris?¹⁵

- 15 **Eusebius** No fewer than forty-two, I believe.

Pampirus We all seemed the same age then.

Eusebius So we were, almost; or the difference, if any, was very slight.

Pampirus But how great the difference now! Glycion hasn't aged at all, and Polygamus might pass for his grandfather.

- 20 **Eusebius** That's a fact. What's the reason?

Pampirus What? Either the one stopped and stood still in his tracks or the other overtook him.

Eusebius Oh, the years don't stop, however much men may.

Polygamus Tell us frankly, Glycion, how many years can you count?

- 25 **Glycion** More than ducats.

Polygamus But how many is that?

Glycion Sixty-six.

Eusebius Oh, truly the 'hoary age of Tithonus,'¹⁶ as they say.

- 30 **Polygamus** But what arts have you used to hold back old age? For you've no gray hair, no wrinkled skin; your eyes are lively, you've a row of white uppers and lowers, your colour's good, and your body plump.

Glycion I'll tell you my arts if you in turn tell us which ones you've used to bring on old age in a hurry.

- 35 **Polygamus** Agreed; I'll do it. Tell us, then, where you went after you left Paris.

Glycion Straight home to my native land. After staying there nearly a year I began to consider the choice of a career,¹⁷ a matter which (in my opinion) has no little bearing on happiness. I observed what succeeded and what failed for various men.

- 40 **Polygamus** I'm surprised you had so much good sense, since at Paris you were the life of the party.

Glycion My age excused it then. And yet, my good friend, I didn't manage entirely without help¹⁸ in this affair.

Polygamus I was wondering about that.

Glycion Before taking up any pursuit, I went to an elderly citizen whose
5 long experience gave him much practical wisdom. He was highly respected by the whole community: in my judgment, the happiest of men.

Eusebius You were wise.

Glycion On his advice, I married.

Polygamus A well-dowered wife?

Glycion Moderately dowered and, according to the proverb, 'a match for
10 me,'¹⁹ since my fortune was modest too. This marriage proved to be all I had hoped.

Polygamus How old were you?

Glycion Almost twenty-two.²⁰

Polygamus Lucky you!

Glycion Don't mistake me – I don't owe this entirely to luck.

Polygamus How's that?

Glycion I'll tell you. Others love before they choose; as for me, I chose with
prudence a woman I could love.²¹ And yet for all that, I married more for
20 the sake of offspring than to indulge passion.²² I lived with my wife most agreeably for no more than eight years.

Polygamus Did she leave you childless?

Glycion By no means. A foursome, two sons and two daughters, survives.

Polygamus Are you a private citizen or do you hold a public office?

Glycion I have a public office. Bigger ones were available, but I took one that
25 would have sufficient dignity to assure respect and be the least troublesome besides.²³ So nobody can accuse me of selfishness; and what's more, I have means of assisting my friends occasionally. Content with this, I've never sought anything higher. In fact, I've conducted myself in the office in such
30 a way as to enhance its prestige. For my part, I regard this as better than borrowing prestige from the lustre of the office.

Eusebius You couldn't be more correct.

Glycion Thus I've grown old, living among my fellow citizens in public esteem.

Eusebius Indeed this is the most difficult thing of all, since not without
35 reason has it been said that the man without enemies is without friends,²⁴ and that envy is always the attendant of good fortune.²⁵

Glycion Exceptional good fortune is usually attended by envy. A middle
40 state is safe.²⁶ And I've always tried to see that my gains were not made at other people's expense. In so far as possible, I've cultivated what the Greeks call 'detachment.'²⁷ I've stayed clear of business, but especially have

- I refrained from what could not have been taken up without making many enemies. So if there's a friend to be helped, I do him a favour in such a fashion that I don't make an enemy on this account. And if a quarrel somehow arises, I smooth it over by an apology, or put an end to it by kindnesses, or let it die by pretending not to notice it. Always I shun controversy; should any come my way, I prefer to lose goods rather than friendship. Moreover, I play the part of a Micio:²⁸ I don't insult people,²⁹ I'm pleasant to everybody, I give courteous greetings, I don't cross anyone, I don't denounce anyone's manner of life or conduct, I don't put on airs, I let everyone have a good opinion of himself.³⁰
- 10 What I prefer to be kept quiet I confide to none. I don't pry into other people's secrets, and if I chance to know them I never blurt them out. I keep my mouth shut about those who are not present or I speak of them cordially and politely. A great many quarrels among men are caused by reckless talk.³¹ I neither provoke nor promote quarrels between others, but I put an end to
- 15 them or mitigate them whenever I have a chance. By these methods I have avoided envy thus far and kept the good will of my fellow citizens.

Pampirus Haven't you found celibacy burdensome?

- Glycion** My wife's death was truly the bitterest blow of my life. I had earnestly hoped she would grow old along with me, and that we would enjoy
- 20 our children together. But when heaven decreed otherwise, I concluded this was best for us both; I did not think it a reason for tormenting myself with foolish grief, especially since that would have done the dead no good.

Polygamus You never had the urge to marry again, even when your first marriage was a happy one?

- 25 **Glycion** Yes, I did, but it was for the sake of children I had married; for the sake of the children I did not remarry.³²

Polygamus But it's miserable to sleep alone night after night.

- Glycion** Nothing's hard if you're determined.³³ Then consider how many advantages celibacy has.³⁴ Some people look on the bad side of everything –
- 30 Crates, for instance, the reputed author of an epigram summing up the evils of life. These people are pleased, no doubt, by his 'Best not to be born at all.' I'm more attracted by Metrodorus, who takes whatever good he can find, from whatever source.³⁵ For thus is life made sweeter. And by disciplining my mind, I'm free of passionate hatred or desire. So if a piece of good
- 35 luck does befall me, I'm not swept off my feet, I don't become arrogant; if something goes wrong, I'm not completely broken up.

Pampirus Well, you're a wiser philosopher than Thales himself if you can achieve this.³⁶

- Glycion** If any bitterness enters my mind – and human life offers many
- 40 occasions for it – I dismiss it at once, whether it be resentment over an injury or over some other unfair treatment.

Polygamus But there are some injuries that enrage even the mildest man. Servants' misdeeds are often of this kind.

Glycion I don't allow myself to brood over anything. If I can mend it, I do so; if not, I reflect, 'What good will it do me to fret about something that's not
5 going to get any better?' What more need I say? I suffer reason to effect in me without delay what time would shortly bring to pass. Surely no affliction of mind is so extreme that I should take it to bed with me.

Eusebius With such a disposition it's no wonder you don't age.

Glycion Moreover – to hold back nothing from friends – I've taken special
10 pains to avoid any wrongdoing that could be a reproach to me or my children, since nothing is more disquieting than a bad conscience. But if I'm at fault for any reason, I don't go to bed until I've first reconciled myself with God.³⁷ The source of true serenity or (to put it in Greek) *εὐθυμία*³⁸ is the sense of being at peace with God. Those who live in this state men cannot
15 seriously harm.

Eusebius Doesn't the fear of death ever torment you?³⁹

Glycion No more than the day of my birth. I know I must die. Anxiety over it would perhaps rob me of some days of life; certainly it wouldn't add any. Therefore I resign this whole care to heaven; I myself worry about nothing
20 but living honourably and agreeably. But to live agreeably without living honourably is impossible.⁴⁰

Pampirus Yet I should be bored growing old if I spent so many years in the same city, even if I happened to live in Rome.⁴¹

Glycion Change of place does afford some pleasure, to be sure; but distant
25 journeys, while they may increase practical wisdom, yet have most dangers. I'm convinced I travel around the world more safely on a map,⁴² and observe not a little more in histories, than I would by roaming over all lands and seas for twenty years like Ulysses.⁴³ I've a little country place⁴⁴ no more than two miles from town. There I sometimes change from citizen to
30 countryman, and after refreshing myself I return to town a stranger; I greet people and am greeted as if I had sailed back from the newly discovered islands.⁴⁵

Eusebius Don't you take medicines to improve your health?

Glycion I've nothing to do with doctors.⁴⁶ I've never been bled, never
35 swallowed pills or drunk potions. If I become run-down I get rid of the trouble by dieting or country life.

Eusebius Don't you give any time to studies?

Glycion Yes, for in them consists the main pleasure of life. But I delight
40 myself with them; I don't exhaust myself, seeing that I study for enjoyment and improvement, not for display. After a meal I entertain myself with good stories or have someone read to me. I never pore over books longer than an

hour at a time. Then I rise, pick up a lute, and walking about the room a bit, either sing, or go over what I've read; and if an old friend's at hand I tell him about it. Then I return to my book.⁴⁷

5 **Eusebius** Tell me honestly, don't you feel any of the discomforts of old age, which are said to be innumerable?

Glycion Sometimes I don't sleep so well; likewise my memory isn't so good as it used to be unless I nail a thing down in it.

I've kept my word: I've explained to you my magical arts by which I stay young. Now let Polygamus tell us with equal candour where he
10 acquired so much old age.

Polygamus Well, I'll conceal nothing from such good companions.

Eusebius You'll be telling persons who will keep it to themselves.

Polygamus You're aware that in my Paris days I had no aversion to Epicurus.

15 **Eusebius** We remember quite well, but we thought you would leave that behaviour in Paris, along with your youth.

Polygamus Of the many girls I had affairs with there, I took one home with me – pregnant, too.

Eusebius To your father's house?

20 **Polygamus** Correct; but I lied and said she was the wife of a friend of mine who would soon come for her.

Glycion Your father believed that?

Polygamus Oh, no, he smelled the thing⁴⁸ out within four days. Whereupon, ferocious quarrels. But I wouldn't give up parties, gambling, and other bad
25 practices meanwhile. In short, since my father never stopped berating me – vowing he wouldn't feed such hens in his house and threatening repeatedly to disinherit me – I cleared out and moved to another place: cock and hen⁴⁹ we were, and the hen produced some chicks for me.

Pampirus What did you live on?

30 **Polygamus** My mother gave me something secretly, and besides that I went head over heels into debt.

Eusebius You found people foolish enough to trust you?

Polygamus There are some who trust no sort more readily.

Pampirus What finally happened?

35 **Polygamus** At last, when my father was seriously preparing to disinherit me, friends intervened and arranged an armistice on condition that I marry a woman of our own country and discard the Frenchwoman.

Eusebius Was she your wife?

40 **Polygamus** Some words were *interchanged* in the future tense, but *intercourse* was in the present.⁵⁰

Eusebius Then how could you cut loose from her?

Polygamus It turned out after a while that my Frenchwoman had a French husband she had deserted long before.

Eusebius And have you a wife now?

Polygamus Only my eighth.

- 5 **Eusebius** Eighth? You weren't named Polygamus without expectations! Perhaps they all died barren.

Polygamus On the contrary, not one failed to leave me some cubs at home.

Eusebius I'd rather have that number of hens to lay me eggs at home. Aren't you tired of many wives?

- 10 **Polygamus** So tired that if this eighth died today, I'd marry the ninth tomorrow.⁵¹ No, I'm sorry I'm not allowed to have two or three at a time, when one rooster may have many hens.

- Eusebius** Well, I don't wonder, you rooster, if you've become thin and have aged so. For nothing brings on old age so much as hard drinking in and out
15 of season, endless amours, and unrestrained sexuality. But who supports your family?

Polygamus I got a moderate sum on the death of my parents and I work hard with my hands.

Eusebius You turned your back on letters, then?

- 20 **Polygamus** Completely. Went from horses to donkeys, as they say;⁵² changed from a student of the seven liberal arts⁵³ into an artisan with one art.

Eusebius Poor fellow! You had to put up with grief and celibacy in equal lots?

- 25 **Polygamus** I never lived celibate more than ten days, and the new wife always drove away the old grief.

You've an honest summary of my life. And I do wish Pampirus would tell us the story of his. He carries his age very handsomely, for unless I'm mistaken he's two or three years older than I.

- 30 **Pampirus** I'll tell you if you've leisure to listen to such stuff.

Eusebius Oh, we'd love to hear it.

Pampirus As soon as I went home, my aged father began to urge me to take up some occupation that would provide me with a good income. After long deliberation I decided on trade.

- 35 **Polygamus** I'm surprised that this career attracted you most.

Pampirus I had a natural longing to become acquainted with new things, different countries, cities, languages, and human customs. Trading seemed particularly suited to that. It's a means of learning practical wisdom, too.

- 40 **Polygamus** But a wretched wisdom, for which, very often, you must pay dearly.

Pampirus Yes. And therefore my father counted out a quite ample sum as capital, that under the favourable auspices of Hercules and Mercury I might get a good start in trading.⁵⁴ At the same time a wife was courted: one with a very large dowry, but of a beauty that would have recommended her even without a dowry.

Eusebius Did you succeed?

Pampirus Not at all. Before I returned home I lost principal and interest both.

Eusebius By shipwreck, perhaps.

10 **Pampirus** Yes, by shipwreck, seeing that I crashed on a rock more dangerous than Malea.⁵⁵

Eusebius What sea is this rock in, or what's its name?

Pampirus I can't name the sea, but the rock, one notorious for causing the destruction of many men, is called *alea* in Latin.⁵⁶ What you'd call it in Greek

15 I don't know.

Eusebius Oh, you fool!

Pampirus No, my father was more foolish for entrusting so large a sum to a young man.

Glycion What happened next?

20 **Pampirus** Nothing – but I began to think of hanging myself.

Glycion Was your father so unrelenting? Money can be made up and a novice is pardoned everywhere.⁵⁷ Much more was a Jack-of-all-trades⁵⁸ to be forgiven.

Pampirus What you say may be true, but meantime, alas, I lost a wife, for as soon as they learned of these omens the girl's parents broke the engagement. And I was desperately in love with her.

Glycion I feel sorry for you. But what did you decide to do?

Pampirus What's usually done in hopeless cases. My father disinherited me, my money was lost, my wife gone. On all sides I kept hearing 'spendthrift!', 'prodigal!', 'squanderer!' In short I deliberated seriously whether to hang myself or thrust myself into a monastery.

Eusebius A hard decision. I know which you'd choose: the milder form of death.

Pampirus No, the one which at that time appeared to me the more cruel death, so completely disgusted with myself was I.

Glycion But many go into it for the sake of a more comfortable life.

Pampirus When I had scraped together a bit of travel money, I went secretly to a far country.

Glycion Where, if you please?

40 **Pampirus** Ireland. There I became a canon, of the kind who wear linen outside, wool inside.⁵⁹

Glycion So you hibernated among the Hibernians?

Pampirus No, after two months with them I sailed for Scotland.

Glycion What displeased you in Ireland?

Pampirus Nothing, except that I considered their rule too soft for one who
5 wasn't fit for a single hanging.⁶⁰

Eusebius What was your choice in Scotland?

Pampirus There among the Carthusians I changed from linen to leather.⁶¹

Eusebius Men wholly dead to the world!⁶²

Pampirus So I thought when I used to hear them singing.⁶³

10 **Glycion** What? The dead even sing? – How many months did you pass with the Scots?

Pampirus Nearly six.

Glycion What perseverance!

Eusebius What fault did you find there?

15 **Pampirus** I thought the life too lazy and luxurious.⁶⁴ Next, I found many there who weren't altogether in their right minds – on account of the solitude, as I suppose.⁶⁵ I had little enough mind; I feared I might lose it all.

Polygamus Where did you fly off to after that?

Pampirus To France. There I found some Benedictines, dressed entirely in
20 black. By the colour of their robe they testify to their mourning in this world; and some of them wear a hair shirt,⁶⁶ like a net, as their upper garment.

Glycion O grievous mortification of the flesh!

Pampirus Here I spent eleven months.

Eusebius What interfered with your staying there the rest of your life?

25 **Pampirus** The fact that I found more rites than true religion there. Besides, I had heard of some far more holy than these, men whom Bernard had recalled to the more rigorous discipline and whose black habit was changed to white.⁶⁷ With these I lived ten months.

Eusebius What was the trouble here?

30 **Pampirus** Nothing much; as companions I found them pleasant enough. But I was influenced by the Greek proverb, 'You must either eat turtle or not eat at all.'⁶⁸ And so I decided either to be a really distinguished monk or else no monk at all. I had heard of certain Brigittines,⁶⁹ thoroughly spiritual men; I betook myself to these.

35 **Eusebius** How many months did you spend there?

Pampirus Less than two days.

Glycion How did this kind of life please you?

Pampirus They receive only those who take the vows straightway. But I
40 wasn't yet so crazy as to submit easily to a halter I'd never be able to shake off. And whenever I heard the nuns singing, I was tormented by thoughts of the wife I'd been robbed of.

Glycion What next?

Pampirus My heart was afire with the love of holiness but nowhere found satisfaction. Finally, in my roving, I came upon some Crutched Friars.⁷⁰ This sign attracted me at once, but variety delayed a decision. Some wore a white cross, others a red, other a green, others a parti-coloured one; some wore a single cross, others a double one; some a quadruple one; some a cross of one shape, others a different one. In order to leave none untried I wore nearly all types. But that very experience taught there's a lot of difference between wearing a cross on a cloak or tunic and wearing it in the heart.⁷¹ At last, exhausted by searching, I thought to myself, 'To attain complete holiness once for all, I'll seek out the Holy Land, and I'll come home loaded down with holiness.'⁷²

Polygamus You didn't go there, did you?

Pampirus Of course I did.

15 **Polygamus** Where did you get the money for travel?

Pampirus I'm astonished that this question has finally occurred to you and wasn't asked a long time ago. But you know the proverb: 'A profession is a livelihood anywhere.'⁷³

Glycion What profession did you practise?

20 **Pampirus** Palmistry.⁷⁴

Glycion Where had you learned that?

Pampirus What does it matter?

Glycion From what teacher?

Pampirus A good one – my belly. I foretold past, present, and future.

25 **Glycion** And did you understand the art?

Pampirus There's nothing I understood less. But I guessed boldly, and safely too – that is, by collecting my fee first.

Polygamus Could such a ridiculous art support you?

Pampirus It could, and two servants besides – so great is the number of fools, male and female, everywhere. But for the purpose of going to Jerusalem I had attached myself to the retinue of a wealthy nobleman seventy years of age. He swore he couldn't die in peace unless he had first been to Jerusalem.⁷⁵

Eusebius And he had left his wife at home?

Pampirus Yes, and six children too.

35 **Eusebius** Unrighteously righteous old man! – And did you come back thence a holy man?

Pampirus Want me to tell you the honest truth? I was considerably worse than I had been before I went.⁷⁶

Eusebius With the result that your religious fervour cooled, I gather.

40 **Pampirus** On the contrary, it burned all the more. So when I returned to Italy, I joined the army.

Eusebius And you were seeking holiness in war, than which there is nothing more wicked?⁷⁷

Pampirus It was a holy war.

Eusebius Against the Turks, perhaps.⁷⁸

5 **Pampirus** Oh, no, something even holier, as they preached at the time.

Eusebius Just what was it?

Pampirus Julius II⁷⁹ was waging war against the French.⁸⁰ Besides, the variety of experience offered by military service recommended it to me.

Eusebius A variety of evils!

10 **Pampirus** So I found out afterwards. Yet I lived more rigorously than in monasteries.

Eusebius What after that?

Pampirus I began to waver now between return to the trading that had been interrupted and pursuit of the religious life that was eluding me. Meantime
15 it occurred to me that they could be combined.

Eusebius What? Be a trader and a religious at the same time?

Pampirus Why not? There's nothing more religious than the mendicant orders, yet nothing more like trade. Mendicants roam everywhere,⁸¹ over land and sea, observe much, hear much, invade every house – common
20 people's, noblemen's, and kings'.

Eusebius But they don't buy and sell.

Pampirus Often more successfully than we do.

Eusebius Which kind did you choose?

Pampirus I tried all types.

25 **Eusebius** None pleased you?

Pampirus Oh, yes, all of them would have pleased me very much had I been able to set up in business right away. But I reflected that I'd have to serve a long time in the choir before any business would be entrusted to me. I began now to think of hunting for an abbacy. But, in the first place, Diana does not
30 favour everyone in this respect,⁸² and often the hunt takes a long time. And so, after eight years spent in this fashion, I went back home, since I had had news of my father's death. On my mother's advice I married and resumed my old business.

Glycion Tell me: since you changed costume so often and were transformed
35 into a different creature, so to speak, how could you play each role fittingly?

Pampirus Why should I be less able to do so than actors, who sometimes play one role after another in the same drama?

Eusebius Tell us frankly, you who have left no profession untried: which of them all do you recommend most highly?

40 **Pampirus** They're not all suitable to all men.⁸³ To me no kind appeals more than this one I've followed.

Eusebius Yet trade has many disadvantages.

Pampirus Yes, but since no profession is without disadvantages I make the best of this Sparta I happen to be in.⁸⁴

5 But now Eusebius is left. He won't mind, among friends, disclosing a scene from his life.

Eusebius Oh, no, the whole play if you like; it doesn't have many acts.

Glycion We'll be delighted.

Eusebius When I had returned to my native land, I deliberated for a year over what career I wanted to follow. At the same time I examined myself in
10 order to learn what sort I was inclined to or fitted for. Meanwhile a prebend (as they call it),⁸⁵ with ample income, was offered. I accepted.

Glycion This profession has a bad name.

Eusebius It seems desirable enough to me, as this world goes. Or do you think it's an inconsiderable blessing to be suddenly given so many advantages,
15 as though they fell from the sky: an honourable office, a handsome and well-appointed house, sufficient annual revenues, respectable society, and a church besides, where you have leisure to worship whenever you like?

Pampirus The dissipation in it used to offend me, and the scandal of concubines,⁸⁶ as well as the fact that most men of that profession hate
20 learning.⁸⁷

Eusebius I don't watch what others do but what I ought to do, and I associate with the better ones if I can't make others better.

Polygamus Have you lived this kind of life without interruption?

Eusebius Continuously, except for four years I spent first at Padua.⁸⁸

25 **Polygamus** What for?

Eusebius I divided those years in such a manner as to give half the year to the study of medicine and the rest to theology.

Polygamus Why that?

Eusebius To better govern both body and soul and to counsel my friends
30 sometimes. For occasionally I preach, too, insofar as my understanding allows. Thus I've lived quietly to date, satisfied with one benefice, not eager for anything more; I'd refuse it if it were offered.

Pampirus If only we could learn what our other classmates, with whom we once lived on such close terms, were doing!

35 **Eusebius** I can bring you up to date on some. – But we're not far from the city, I see. So, if you approve, we'll meet at the same inn. There, at our leisure, we'll compare notes on the others to our hearts' content.

Hugh *the carrier*. Where did you pick up such a miserable cargo, One-Eye?

40 **Harry**, *another carrier*. Well, but where are you hauling that brothel-load to, you whoremonger?

Hugh You should have dumped those frigid old fellows into a brier bush somewhere, to warm them up.

Harry Oh, no. Take care of *that* flock there: dump them into a bog somewhere to cool them off; they're too hot.

5 **Hugh** I'm not in the habit of spilling my load.

Harry No? But lately I saw you upset half a dozen Carthusians into the mire, so that they came out black instead of white. You were laughing all the while as though you'd done a good deed.

Hugh It didn't hurt them. They were all asleep, and they added a lot of
10 weight to my wagon.

Harry But these old chaps of mine have lightened my wagon wonderfully, gabbing away through the whole trip. Never saw a better lot.

Hugh Yet as a rule you aren't pleased by such.

Harry But these are good old lads.

15 **Hugh** How do you know?

Harry Because they stood me to damned good beer three times along the way.

Hugh Ha, ha! They're good to *you*, anyway.

NOTES

1 Pampirus] Misspelled 'Pambirus' in the cast of characters in the first edition (BE 2nd series *Colloquia* I 136).

2 *Adagia* II i 21

3 Cf Terence *Phormio* 735

4 Spectacles (*vitreis oculis*), as in *Moriae encomium* LB IV 442D / ASD IV-3 121:949

5 *fascinator* 'one who exercises the evil eye,' as in Gal 3:1. See Erasmus' note on that verse in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 811E-F.

6 His caduceus; *Adagia* II v 34

7 *currum* (cf Allen Ep 1117:1); a general term for cart, carriage, or other passenger vehicles, predecessors of the public omnibus. Stagecoaches were not yet in general use. See R. Straus *Carriages and Coaches* (London 1912). For an interesting account of experiences (by Erasmus and some contemporaries) of travel by cart or wagon see J. Hoyoux 'Les voyages d'Erasmus et de Jérôme Aléandre: un chapitre de vie quotidienne' in *Colloquium Erasmianum* 315-25. Allusions to the difficulties and discomforts of travel by land or water are found throughout Erasmus' correspondence and the *Colloquies* ('The Shipwreck' and 'Inns,' for example). See also Lucien Febvre *Life in Renaissance France* ed and trans Marian Rothstein (Cambridge, Mass 1977) chapter 5.

8 At that time Antwerp was the largest port in Europe.

9 Erasmus complains of them in Allen Ep 240:18-22 / CWE Ep 240:19-23; for the sequel see Allen Ep 243:1-11 / CWE Ep 243:1-12.

10 *Adagia* I viii 85

- 11 Carriers had a reputation for stealing the wine they were paid to transport; see for example the references in n9 above and Allen Epp 3100:33-4, 3103:7-9.
- 12 The alternative could mean a long delay. The difference is comparable to 'waiting for the bus' and 'taking a taxi.' In Allen Ep 76:13-29 / CWE Ep 76:15-33 Erasmus tells of being held up in Brussels for a fortnight in the summer of 1498 before he could find a way of getting to Paris.
- 13 Quoted by Gellius 17.14.4 from Publilius Syrus 104, on whom see CWE 24 628:20n. Erasmus' habit was to take a book or two along to dispel the tedium of travel if he had no agreeable conversationalists among fellow passengers (Allen Ep 1013:21-30 / CWE Ep 1013:27-37).
- 14 'To speak as from a wagon (*plaustro*)' meant speaking with extreme frankness or scurrility, because in ancient Greece comedies were once played on boards laid on a wagon (*Adagia* I vii 73).
- 15 At the university
- 16 The expression is in Greek in the original. The mythical Tithonus was granted immortality but not eternal youth (*Adagia* I vi 65). The most memorable evocations of his plight in English literature are Swift's account of the struldbruggs in *Gulliver's Travels* 3.10 and Tennyson's 'Tithonus.'
- 17 Erasmus often stresses the importance of sufficient deliberation in this matter; see 'Youth' n76.
- 18 *meo Marte*; *Adagia* I vi 19
- 19 Greek in the original. Another piece of traditional wisdom; *Adagia* I viii 1. Erasmus considered equality of social condition and compatibility of temperament essential to a satisfactory marriage. His convictions on these and many other aspects of marriage are set forth in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (1526) LB v 615A-724B. Two of the best colloquies, 'Courtship' and 'Marriage,' illustrate those convictions.
- 20 Bride and groom should be the same or nearly the same age (cf 'Courtship' n47 and *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 665F-666F), but examples to the contrary are easily found in Erasmus' time. In *Utopia* twenty-two is the prescribed age for a man to marry, eighteen for a woman.
- 21 'Choose a wife not only with your eyes but with your ears,' he advises a former secretary who is about to marry (Allen Ep 2700:151-4; *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 661A; and cf 'Marriage' 318:31-3).
- 22 Begetting and nurture of children is the primary though not the sole purpose of marriage, according to Christian teaching (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 615C, 617D and passim). In 'Courtship' both propagation and affectionate companionship of husband and wife are emphasized.
- 23 For the cares of office are many; *Enchiridion* LB v 23F / Holborn 60:31-2 / CWE 66 59
- 24 Plutarch records that Chilon of Sparta, one of the Seven Sages of ancient Greece, after hearing a man boast of having no enemy, asked him if he had no friend (*Moralia* 86c *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate*). By trying to injure someone an enemy causes a man to be more vigilant, hence does him good. To that extent an enemy is a 'friend.' In *Paraboliae* CWE 23 189:7-191:14 Erasmus uses many dicta of this kind from Plutarch's essay. He translated *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate* LB IV 23A-30B / ASD IV-2 165-84.

- 25 Cf Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.7 1108b4 and *Rhetoric* 2.9 1386b18–20 and 2.10, especially 1388a1–2; Plutarch *Moralia* 536f, 537A *De invidia et odio*
- 26 Horace's 'golden mean' (*Odes* 2.10.5)
- 27 ἀπραξία 'leisure,' 'inaction' (in Plato *Sophist* 262c), or, as Glycion says, 'staying clear of business'
- 28 A complaisant, indulgent character in Terence *Adelphi*, as kind as his brother Demea is harsh
- 29 *Adelphi* 864
- 30 *Adagia* II i 15. The behaviour described in these lines represents a standard of decorum familiar from Cicero's *De officiis*.
- 31 Discussed in Erasmus' *Lingua* (1525) LB IV 657B–754A / ASD IV-1A / CWE 29 249–412, and see *Adagia* II x 47. In the *Colloquies*, 'The Liar and the Man of Honour' and 'The Knight without a Horse' touch on the subject.
- 32 In the 'The Funeral' the dying husband advises his wife, for the sake of their children, against marrying again but tells her she is at liberty to marry 'if weakness of the flesh shall call otherwise' (778:10–34). Approving of the marriage of a former secretary to a widow, Erasmus (1532) adds that 'More often tells me that if he were to marry a hundred wives, not one of them would be a virgin' (Allen Ep 2735:1–11). More's second wife, Dame Alice, was a widow when they married; on More's first wife see 'Marriage' n31. On widows and widowhood see Erasmus' *De vidua christiana* LB V 723C–766E / CWE 66 184–257.
- 33 Hans Walther *Proverbia sententiaeque Latinitatis medii aevi* / *Lateinische Sprichwörter und Sentenzen des Mittelalters* = *Carmina medii aevi posterioris Latina* part 2, 5 vols plus index (Göttingen 1963–9) 16697c. Not found in this form in *Adagia*, but cf II i 12. Common in English (Tilley N299).
- 34 On the meaning of the term see 'Courtship' n53.
- 35 These contrasting judgments by Crates the Cynic (c 365–285 BC) and the Epicurean Metrodorus of Lampsacus (331–278 BC), are quoted in *Adagia* II iii 49 on 'Best not to be born at all.' As Erasmus writes there, the words of Crates were attributed by some to the poet Posidippus (c 270 BC). For texts and translations see the *Greek Anthology* 9.359, 360 trans W.R. Paton, Loeb Classical Library, 5 vols (London and Cambridge, Mass 1916–18) III 193, 195. Crates' opinion is quoted again in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 672A.
- 36 A reference to the presocratic philosopher. See *Adagia* III vii 26.
- 37 A practice learned in youth. See 'Youth' 94:1–7.
- 38 Tranquillity, stability, peace of mind. A classic exposition of it is Seneca *De tranquillitate animi*, who refers to the treatise on this virtue by Democritus (2.3–4). Christian tranquillity is best exemplified in the *Colloquies* by Glycion and by Cornelius in 'The Funeral.'
- 39 See 'The Funeral' 766:17–35.
- 40 This theme is treated in 'The Lover of Glory' and 'The Epicurean.'
- 41 Cf 'Benefices' n10.
- 42 The monk in 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' expresses the same opinion; see 330:34–6 and n6.
- 43 Who 'saw many men's cities and knew their minds' (*Odyssey* 1.3), becoming a paragon of practical wisdom and resourcefulness. Yet, wrote Erasmus to a friend (1529), you can learn more in one year without risk, from philosophers' teachings and from geography and history, than Ulysses did in twenty years of wandering (Allen Ep 2161:6–15).

- 44 *praediolum*, the same term used of Eusebius' villa in 'The Godly Feast' 176:1
- 45 On these see 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n7.
- 46 For a satirical picture of them see 'The Funeral' 767:3–35.
- 47 Like many Renaissance writers on education, Erasmus recommended alternation of study and play. See for example Allen Ep 56:57–61 / *CWE* Ep 56:67–71, Allen Ep 3042:23–5, and cf *Parabola* *CWE* 23 357:28–32; in the *Colloquies* 'Patterns' 23:13–16 and 'Sport' 75:33–4, where schoolboys remind the master of Quintilian's advice on this subject. Ascham in *Toxophilus* (1545) tells of hearing in Cambridge that when Erasmus lived there (April 1511–January 1514), after he 'had ben sore at his boke . . . for lacke of better exercise, [he] wolde take his horse, and ryde about the markette hill, and come agayne' (*English Works* ed W.A. Wright [Cambridge 1904; repr 1970] 18).
- 48 Terence *Adelphi* 397
- 49 Since this affair began in Paris, the passage echoes the familiar puns on *gallus*, *gallina*, *Galla*, *Gallus*. See 'Patterns' n71. With 'hen . . . chicks' compare 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 469:8.
- 50 Cf 'Marriage' 319:9.
- 51 In 'The New Mother' 591:17–20 another Polygamus is said to have buried his tenth wife and to be now courting his eleventh. One of More's epigrams says much the same (*Latin Epigrams* 40, 163 no 67).
- 52 'When a man turns aside from an honourable vocation to something less reputable'; *Adagia* I vii 29 / *CWE* 32 83
- 53 The trivium (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic) and quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music), the medieval scheme of education
- 54 Hercules because his favour would bring prosperity (*Adagia* I i 73); Mercury because he was the patron of trade, luck, and merchants
- 55 A dangerous headland on the coast of south-eastern Peloponnesus; *Adagia* II iv 46.
- 56 Dice
- 57 *Adagia* I ix 61; *protopiro* 'novice' or 'beginner' transliterates a Greek word.
- 58 *Pampiro*, someone who will 'try everything,' as opposed to *protopiro*, who is trying something for the first time
- 59 That is, he became an Augustinian canon regular. See *Moriae encomium* LB IV 472A / ASD IV-3 160:456–8 / *CWE* 27 131; 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n97; cf 'Exorcism' n9 and 'A Pilgrimage' n46.
- 60 A remark that must have amused readers who knew that Erasmus himself was a member of this order
- 61 *pelliceus*, of skin or hide; probably an allusion to the Carthusian tunic or belt or to the hair shirt worn by that order; see n66 below. Pampirus' narrative is such a farrago of exaggerations, however, that his assertions cannot be pressed too closely – as his companions' comments show.
- 62 A phrase used, often seriously, sometimes ironically, about Carthusians and other monks or friars; see for instance 'The Seraphic Funeral' 1003:1; *Enarratio in psalmum xxxiii* LB V 399F; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 814D; Allen Ep 2771:30. The image is scriptural (Col 2:20, 3:3; cf Rom 6:2; Gal 6:14; Phil 1:21). In *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1022F Erasmus disapproves of the use of it by religious as arrogant. His estimates of Carthusians are ambivalent; see 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' introduction 328–9.
- 63 In choir

- 64 On the contrary, Carthusians were generally regarded as the most austere of the orders.
- 65 Essential to Carthusian life but impossible for this or other scoffers to understand; see the soldier's comment on what he perceives to be the Carthusian's 'brain fever' at 330:9-10 and 'A Fish Diet' 717:1-3.
- 66 *cilicium*, the rough shirt worn under other clothing to discipline the flesh. Benedictines did not require it, but some monks chose to wear it. For Carthusians it was obligatory.
- 67 Cistercians. St Bernard of Clairvaux (d 1153) became the order's most famous and influential abbot; he was one of the most eloquent of medieval theologians.
- 68 Erasmus quotes it in Greek. It means that eating a bit of turtle is not safe; you must either eat much or none. Similarly you must fight or not fight, study or not study; halfway measures are no use. *Adagia* I x 60.
- 69 This order, founded by St Bridget of Sweden (c 1346), had double monasteries of men and women. They were ruled by an abbess, but monks (being priests) had the spiritual direction. Monks and nuns used the same chapel. A friend to whom Erasmus dedicated one of his translations from Lucian, Richard Whitford, was a monk of Syon in Middlesex, the only Brigittine abbey in England and a house noted for its wealth and its library (Epp 89, 191). Another friend of Erasmus, Johannes Oecolampadius of Basel, was for a time a member of this order.
- 70 *Fratres cruciferi*, who carried or wore a cross. The order, founded in the twelfth century, was one of several that followed the Augustinian Rule. Erasmus mentions them in 'A Fish Diet' (705:24) and 'The Funeral' (769:25). Erasmus alludes again to the variety of their costume in *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 948C.
- 71 Such affirmation of the essential difference between appearances and authentic realities of religion provides the theme of 'Cyclops.'
- 72 Erasmus' conviction that pilgrimages did pilgrims more harm than good was unshakeable. See 'Rash Vows,' 'A Pilgrimage,' and the notes to those colloquies.
- 73 *Adagia* I vii 33, where Erasmus emphasizes the necessity of everyone's having an honest means of support. But nowadays, he adds, we meet people who get their living by carrying around pardons and dispensations to buy and sell. Cf 'Military Affairs' n18.
- 74 Chiromancy, a common and fairly simple 'art' (with lines 25-6 here compare 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 474:20-1). Cornelius Agrippa, writing on the influence of heavenly bodies on temperament and habit, gives brief attention to chiromancy as a means of foretelling future events (*De occulta philosophia* [1533]; facsimile text ed W.A. Nowotny [Graz 1967]; an English translation by J.F. was published in 1651).
- 75 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies* 1099:6-22 relates a cautionary tale of another wealthy nobleman who went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
- 76 As another pilgrim reports; see 'Rash Vows' 37:24-5 and n5.
- 77 For Erasmus' ideas on war see references in the introductions to 'Military Affairs' 54-5 and 'Charon' 819-20.
- 78 See 'The New Mother' n19.
- 79 Pope 1503-13. When elected he promised to continue war against the Turks but failed to do so. He did however take an aggressive and usually successful part, both diplomatic and military, in political struggles nearer home. Machiavelli

admired his energy and audacity (*The Prince* chapter 24). Erasmus on the other hand had an invincible aversion to this 'earthly Jupiter' (Allen Ep 1756:23). In November 1506 he witnessed Julius' triumphant entry into Bologna after the city's surrender to the papal forces – an event he considered a distressing and unforgettable example of papal worldliness. See Allen Epp 203:7–10, 205:8–9 / CWE Epp 203:8–11, 205:42–3; *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 455F–456E; *Apologiae contra Stunicam* LB IX 361A. For other typical comments on Julius see *De copia* CWE 24 598:26–600:20; *De concordia* LB V 485D; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 898B–899C; *Apologiae contra Stunicam* LB IX 370C. Many other pages in his writings recall this pope, but Erasmus' most memorable account of him is the brilliant if scandalous dialogue *Julius exclusus e coelis*. For good reasons – among them his anxiety about getting papal dispensations from canonical regulations – Erasmus never acknowledged authorship and came very close to denying it. Despite the doubts of a few scholars, the consensus ascribes the satire to him. A manuscript copy in the hand of Bonifacius Amerbach survives. On this and on printed editions see Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 55–63; for Latin text of the dialogue *ibidem* 65–124. There is an English translation by Michael J. Heath in CWE 27 155–97; see also *The Julius Exclusus of Erasmus* trans Paul Pascal, ed J. Kelley Sowards (Bloomington and London 1968). A partial translation into English was printed in 1534 (*British Museum Quarterly* 23 [1961] 59–63; translator's identity unknown).

See further Allen Ep 502 introduction; R.H. Bainton 'Erasmus and Luther and the Dialog Julius Exclusus' in *Festschrift Lau, Vierhundertfünfzig Jahre lutherische Reformation* (Leipzig 1967) 17–26; James K. McConica 'Erasmus and the "Julius"' in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion* ed Charles Trinkaus and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden 1974) 444–71.

A satirical epigram on Julius was ascribed to Erasmus when it was discovered and first printed in 1925; for the text see Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 36–7. This attribution was confirmed some years later when another manuscript copy, in Erasmus' hand, was found with, on the reverse, the word 'Rosso,' which C. Reedijk took to be a pseudonym of Thomas More; see 'Een Schimpdicht van Erasmus op Julius II' in *Opstellen door vrienden en collegas aangeboden aan Dr. F.H.K. Kossman* (The Hague 1958) 186–207. See also the text, translation, introduction, and notes in CWE 85–6 338–9, 696–701 no 119.

- 80 After receiving assistance from the French in his campaign against Venice (1509), which had seized some papal territories, he then changed sides and organized a Holy League (the papacy, Venice, Spain, England) against France (1511). Subsequently the French were forced to withdraw from northern Italy.
- 81 See 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 474:13–19, 'The Funeral' 768:30–4.
- 82 See 'Patterns' n59.
- 83 Cf *Adagia* II iii 94.
- 84 Do the best I can in the field I have chosen or in which I find myself; *Adagia* II v 1
- 85 Stipend received by a member (usually a canon) of a cathedral chapter from a share of the cathedral's manorial estates
- 86 See 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 469:3–10 and n6.
- 87 Such as the abbot in 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady'
- 88 The most famous Italian universities of Erasmus' era were in Padua and Bologna. He visited both cities in November–December of 1508 and mentions

Padua approvingly many years later (Allen Epp 1479:178-80, 2290:22-6, 2328:54-5). When he first arrived in Italy he paused briefly at Turin to take a degree (doctor of theology) at the university there. Although Erasmus often writes of the learned men he met in Italy he says little of the universities as such. On his Italian years consult A. Renaudet *Erasme et l'Italie* (Geneva 1954).

THE WELL-TO-DO BEGGARS¹

Πτωχοπλούσιοι

First printed in the March 1524 edition. In later editions *Franciscani* was added as a running title.

According to Conradus Pellicanus, this colloquy is based on information he gave to Erasmus (*Das Chronikon des Konrad Pellikan* ed Bernhard Riggenbach [Basel 1877] 79–80). Pellicanus claimed credit too for furnishing hints for the colloquy on the death of Reuchlin. A Franciscan who was also professor in Basel, Pellicanus left the order in 1526 and joined the Zwinglian reformers. Until that date he had been a close friend of Erasmus. On his career see CEBR.

In 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' Erasmus holds that ignorant country pastors would profit by reading this dialogue and that it should enable some readers to take a more sensible view of monastic dress. His 'philosophy of clothes' is interesting because of its note of cultural relativism and his remarks on the customs of native peoples in 'lands recently discovered,' the Americas. Equally interesting to students of Erasmus' religious thought are the pronouncements on the received, but in his opinion fallacious, distinctions between 'religious' (*religiosi*) and laity. His convictions on this subject were by no means novel. See for example Etienne Gilson *Héloïse and Abélard* trans L.K. Shook (Chicago 1951; repr Ann Arbor and Toronto 1960), who refers to this 'famous colloquy' and finds similarities between Héloïse's criticism of monasticism and Erasmus' (136–42, 189, 190).

The village priest is much like the obstreperous parson in a later dialogue, 'The Funeral.' In both colloquies we hear of contention between priest and mendicant friars, a constant ecclesiastical difficulty and a common theme for reformers long before Erasmus was born. A truly devout and dutiful village priest is more estimable than many Carthusians or Brigittines (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 823F–824A). More tells an anecdote of a virtuous priest who was obviously superior in piety and learning to an ignorant Franciscan (*Correspondence* 197:1197–199:1284; *Selected Letters* 132–5). The priest in 'The Funeral' is far from a model shepherd, but morally he is probably no worse than the friars he opposes. In the present colloquy, however, the two Franciscans are exemplary, the priest dissolute and lazy. Sometimes, as in this instance, the best and most judicious critics of an institution are its enlightened representatives (so Erasmus maintains in Allen Ep 1469:38–40 / CWE Ep 1469:42–4). Conversely in the next dialogue, 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady,' the abbot, a complacent and incorrigible dignitary, is a convincing example of weakness and idleness. Erasmus often criticized the

mendicant orders, at times very severely. Though in principle protected by the Holy See, they were numerous enough and powerful enough to be formidable even to popes and princes. He considered their aggressiveness one of the underlying causes of the Lutheran revolt (Allen Ep 1033:121-4 / CWE Ep 1033:131-6, written in 1519 to Albert, cardinal-archbishop of Mainz; and see a letter of 1527, Allen Ep 1875:137-54). His dislike of them was not unusual and his attacks on them no more severe than those by many others. Yet he could and did maintain, with reason, that he did not condemn a whole class or institution without making exceptions for deserving individuals; see 'The Funeral' 775:34-41 and n94. For unflattering portraits of Franciscans see 'The Sermon' and 'The Seraphic Funeral'; for an account of an admirable Franciscan, Allen Epp 1211:13-245, 1347:104-17 / CWE Epp 1211:16-273, 1347:116-129.

Bataillon thinks the censure of mendicants in Juan de Valdés' *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* (1529) reminiscent of this colloquy; see his edition (Coimbra 1925) 107. On a Spanish translation of the colloquy by Alonso Ruiz de Virués (also 1529) see Bataillon *Erasmus et l'Espagne* xxix, 326.

CONRAD, BERNARDINE,² PASTOR, INNKEEPER³ and his WIFE

Conrad – Yet hospitality becomes a pastor.⁴

Pastor I'm a pastor of sheep; I don't like wolves.

- 5 **Conrad** Maybe you don't hate she-wolves so much, though.⁵ – But just what's so bad about us that you refuse even to grant us shelter? We won't trouble you for supper.

- Pastor** I'll tell you: it's because if you saw a hen or chicks in my house,⁶ you'd abuse me before the people in a sermon tomorrow.⁷ That's the thanks
10 you generally return for the hospitality shown you.

Conrad We're not all that sort.

Pastor Be whatever sort you please; I'd scarcely trust St Peter if he came to me in such dress.

Conrad If that's how you feel, at least direct us to another lodging.

- 15 **Pastor** There's a public house in this village.

Conrad What sign has it?

Pastor On a swinging board you'll see a dog thrusting its mouth into a pot;⁸ this takes place in the kitchen. At the counter sits a wolf.

Conrad An ominous sign.

- 20 **Pastor** Enjoy yourselves!

Bernardine What sort of pastor is this? We could starve, for all he cared.

Wie man die falschen Propheten erkennen ia greif fen mag/ Ein predig/ zu Wynden inn Westphalen gethan/ durch D. Urbanum Rhegium.

Canonicus

Monachus.



*Wynden hoch
Lage von Braunschweig
Niederrhein*

Jeremie 10. Die Hirten sind zu narren worden/ vnd fragen
nichts nach Gott/ Darumb können sie auch nichts rechts leren/
sondern zerstreuen die Herd.

Illustration for a sermon by Urbanus Rhegius (1489–1541)
on how to recognize false prophets (Braunschweig: A. Goldbeck 1539)
showing a canon and a monk as wolves devouring a sheep

The same symbolism – wolves as attackers of harmless and innocent victims –
is behind the allusions to wolves in the opening lines of 'The Well-to-do-Beggars.'

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Conrad If he feeds his flock no better than he does us, they must be pretty lean.

Bernardine Adversity calls for good counsel. What shall we do?

Conrad Put on a bold front.⁹

5 **Bernardine** Bashfulness is no use, clearly, when one is hard pressed.¹⁰

Conrad Very true. St Francis will stand by us.

Bernardine Good luck to us!

Conrad We won't wait at the door for the innkeeper's answer but burst right into the stove room itself.¹¹ And we won't easily be thrown out.

10 **Bernardine** A brazen piece of behaviour!

Conrad Better than spending the night outdoors and freezing to death. Put your shame in your bag for a while.¹² Get it out tomorrow whenever you please.

Bernardine All right; there's no help for it.

15

Innkeeper What sort of creatures do I see here?

Conrad Servants of God, sons of St Francis, my good man.

Innkeeper Whether God is pleased with such servants I don't know; as for me, I wouldn't want many in my house.

20 **Conrad** Why?

Innkeeper Because when it comes to eating and drinking you're more than men; for working, you've neither hands nor feet. Oh-ho, sons of St Francis, are you? You're always telling us he's a virgin, and has he so many sons?

Conrad We're sons of the spirit, not of the flesh.

25 **Innkeeper** Unlucky begetter, he was. Your spirit is the worst part of you.¹³ In body you're altogether too fit – clearly too lusty to suit one who has a wife and daughters in his house.

Conrad You may suspect us of being the sort who depart from the founder's Rule. We're Observants.¹⁴

30 **Innkeeper** I'll observe you, then, to see that you don't cause me any loss. For that kind I hate worst of all.

Conrad Why, I ask you?

Innkeeper Because you carry teeth but no money with you¹⁵ – the sort of guests I like least.

35 **Conrad** But we work on your behalf.

Innkeeper Want me to show you how you work?

Conrad Show us.

40 **Innkeeper** Look at the picture nearest you, on your left. There you see a fox preaching, but at his back a goose thrusts its head out of the cowl.¹⁶ Again, you see a wolf giving absolution to one who has confessed, but part of a sheep hidden under his robe sticks out.¹⁷ You see an ape in Franciscan dress

sitting by a sick man's bed; he holds out a crucifix in one hand and has the other in the sick man's purse.¹⁸

Conrad We don't deny that wolves, foxes, and apes are clothed in this dress sometimes; nay, we even admit that pigs, dogs, horses, lions, and basilisks often wear it. But this same garment clothes many good men. As clothes don't make a man better, so they don't make a man worse.¹⁹ It's wrong, therefore, to judge anyone by his dress. Otherwise the dress *you* sometimes use must needs be abhorred because it covers many thieves, murderers, poisoners, and adulterers.

Innkeeper I'll yield in the dress if you pay your bill.

Conrad We'll pray to God for you.

Innkeeper I'll do the same for you, tit for tat.²⁰

Conrad But you shouldn't take money from everyone.

Innkeeper Why are you superstitious about touching money?

Conrad Because it's contrary to our profession.²¹

Innkeeper Same here: it's contrary to *my* profession to take a guest free of charge.

Conrad But the Rule forbids us to touch money.

Innkeeper But my rule commands the opposite.

Conrad Where's your rule?

Innkeeper Read those verses:

Guests who at table have eaten your fill,
Don't hurry away without paying your bill.

Conrad We won't be any expense to you.

Innkeeper But those who aren't any expense to me aren't any profit to me, either.

Conrad God will reward you abundantly if you do us a kindness.

Innkeeper I don't keep my family on these words.

Conrad We'll retire to a corner of the stove room and won't bother anyone.

Innkeeper This stove room won't hold such creatures.

Conrad So you're turning us out, perhaps to be devoured by wolves tonight?

Innkeeper Wolf won't eat wolf, just as dog won't eat dog.²²

Conrad You'd be cruel to do this to Turks. Whatever we're like, we're men.²³

Innkeeper You sing to the deaf.²⁴

Conrad You take very nice care of your own body, lying undressed behind the stove – and you thrust us out to perish in the freezing night,²⁵ even if the wolves should spare us!

Innkeeper Adam lived so in paradise.

Conrad Yes, but he was innocent.

Innkeeper And I'm innocent, too.

Conrad Perhaps – with the first syllable left off. But take care: if you turn us out of your paradise now, God may not admit you to his.

5 **Innkeeper** Mind your tongue.

Wife Husband, make up for your many misdeeds by this kindness at least. Let them use our house tonight. They're good men. You'll find your profit hereafter will grow as a result.

Innkeeper Just look at the intercessor woman!²⁶ There's an understanding
10 between you, I'll warrant. And I'm not altogether pleased to hear this testimonial, 'good men,' from my wife.²⁷

Wife Oh, nonsense. But think how often you sin by dice-playing, drunkenness, quarrels, and brawls. At least atone for your sins by this act of mercy; don't turn out those you hope will be at your side when you're
15 dying.²⁸ You often admit fools and jesters;²⁹ and do you drive these men away?

Innkeeper Where did this madam preacher³⁰ come from? Go tend to your kitchen affairs.

Wife I will.

20 **Bernardine** He's giving in.³¹ And he's putting on his shirt. I hope all will be well.

Conrad And the servants are setting the table. It's all right, because no guests have arrived; otherwise, out we'd have gone.

Bernardine Lucky for us we brought along a flask of wine and a leg of roast
25 lamb from the town nearby, else – for all I can see – this fellow wouldn't even have shared his hay with us.

Conrad Now the servants have sat down. Let's take places at the side of the table, but so as not to get in anyone's way.

Innkeeper I think it must be your fault I haven't a single guest today except
30 the servants and you good-for-nothing creatures.

Conrad Blame us – unless this often happens.

Innkeeper Oftener than I could wish.

Conrad Don't worry, Christ still lives; he will not forsake his own.

Innkeeper I've heard you're called gospellers, but the gospel forbids
35 carrying bread or wallet along the way.³² You've long sleeves for wallets, I see, and you carry not only bread but even wine and the choicest of meat.

Conrad Enjoy it with us if you will.

Innkeeper My wine's flat by comparison with this.

Conrad Taste the meat, too. There's plenty left for us.

40 **Innkeeper** Lucky beggars! My wife has cooked nothing today but cabbage and mouldy bacon.

Conrad Let's share³³ our provisions if you like, for what we eat is nothing to us.

Innkeeper Then why don't you carry cabbage and vapid wine?

Conrad Because those with whom we lunched today chose to force this
5 on us.

Innkeeper You had a free lunch?

Conrad Certainly. What's more, they even thanked us, and as we left they loaded us with these presents to take along.³⁴

Innkeeper Where have you come from?

10 **Conrad** Basel.

Innkeeper What, from so far?

Conrad Yes.

Innkeeper What kind of men are you, anyway, to wander like this without pack-horse, without purse, without servants, without arms, without
15 provisions?³⁵

Conrad You behold a sort of survival of the evangelical life.

Innkeeper Seems to me a life of vagabonds³⁶ who roam about with a net.³⁷

Conrad The apostles were such vagabonds, and such, too, was the Lord Jesus.

20 **Innkeeper** Do you understand palmistry?

Conrad There's nothing I understand less.³⁸

Innkeeper Then where does your living come from?³⁹

Conrad From him who has promised it.

Innkeeper Who's that?

25 **Conrad** He who said, 'Do not be anxious; all these things shall be added unto you.'⁴⁰

Innkeeper So he promised, but to those who seek the kingdom of God.

Conrad That we do with all our might.

Innkeeper The apostles won renown by miracles; they healed the sick. No
30 wonder, therefore, that provision was made for them everywhere. You can't do anything like that.

Conrad We could if we were like the apostles and if the situation called for a miracle. But miracles were granted at the time for the sake of unbelievers.⁴¹ Nowadays we need only a holy life. And often it is more blessed to be sick
35 than whole, to die than to live.

Innkeeper What is it you do, then?

Conrad What we can, each according to his own gift received from heaven: we comfort, exhort, admonish, reproach when occasion offers; we sometimes preach, too, wheresoever we find the pastors silent.⁴² If we have
40 no opportunity to do good, we endeavour to avoid harming anyone by our speech and behaviour.

Innkeeper I wish you felt like preaching for us tomorrow, for it's a feast day hereabouts.

Conrad To which saint?

Innkeeper Antony.⁴³

5 **Conrad** Excellent man indeed, he was; but why the feast day?

Innkeeper I'll tell you. This village is full of swineherds, on account of a neighbouring grove rich in acorns. And it's convinced that to Antony is assigned protection of the herd; hence they venerate him in order that he won't feel neglected and become angry.

10 **Conrad** Would that they truly venerated him!

Innkeeper How?

Conrad Whoever has emulated the saints has honoured them most devoutly.⁴⁴

Innkeeper Tomorrow this entire village will ring with carousings, dances,
15 games, quarrels, and fights.⁴⁵

Conrad So the heathen used to worship their Bacchus. But if this is the way Antony is honoured I wonder he isn't furious with men who are crasser than swine. What sort of pastor have you? Dumb and dissolute?⁴⁶

Innkeeper What he's like to others I don't know. To me he's very good,
20 since he drinks here all day. Nobody brings in more boozers or better ones, to my great profit. And for that reason I'm surprised he isn't here now.

Conrad We found him anything but accommodating.

Innkeeper What do I hear? You've paid your respects to the man?

Conrad We sought hospitality of him. He drove us from his threshold as
25 though we were wolves and bade us come here.

Innkeeper Ha, ha! Now I understand. That's why he didn't want to come – he knew you'd be here.

Conrad He's not speechless?

Innkeeper Speechless? There's no one noisier in the stove room,⁴⁷ and in
30 church he bellows with all his might. I've never heard him preach.⁴⁸ – Why say more? You learned for yourselves, I see, that he's not tongue-tied.

Conrad Is he well versed in Sacred Scripture?⁴⁹

Innkeeper Profoundly – he says; but whatever he's learned of such subjects he's learned in secret confession, so that it's not lawful to display it before
35 others. To sum up, people and priest are well matched; the lid fits the pan.⁵⁰

Conrad Maybe he won't give way to a preacher.

Innkeeper He'll give way, I warrant, but on condition that you don't take any shots at him, as most of you generally do.⁵¹

40 **Conrad** That's a bad habit some have. For my part, I admonish the pastor privately if he does amiss. The rest is the bishops' job.

Innkeeper Such birds seldom fly this way. I see you're good fellows, all right. But what's the meaning of this variety of costume? Many folk think you're rascals for this very reason – because of the way you dress.

Conrad How come?

5 **Innkeeper** I don't know, unless many of you are found to be such.

Conrad Many think us holy for the very reason that we *are* so dressed. Both are wrong, but those who think well of us because of our dress err more generously than those who think ill.

10 **Innkeeper** Granted. But precisely what's the use of so many distinctions in dress?

Conrad What do you think?

Innkeeper None at all, it seems to me, except in processions or wars. In processions various figures – of saints, Jews, pagans – are carried about; these we distinguish by their different dress. And in wars variety of costume
15 is useful because it enables soldiers to follow their own flag and prevents confusion in the ranks.

Conrad Very well put. And this too is a military garb.⁵² Some of us follow one leader, some another, but we are all soldiers under the one emperor, Christ. Now in dress there are three things to be considered.⁵³

20 **Innkeeper** What?

Conrad Necessity, function, and decorum. Why do we take food?

Innkeeper To avoid starving.

Conrad Likewise we sometimes put on clothes to avoid freezing.

Innkeeper Granted.

25 **Conrad** For this purpose our dress is more serviceable than yours, for it covers head, neck, and shoulders, where there's most danger. Function demands different kinds of clothing: a short garment is suitable for riding, a long one for resting, a thin one in summer, a thick one in winter. At Rome there are men who change clothes three times every single day. In the
30 morning they put on a fur-lined garment, towards noon an unlined one, again in the evening a somewhat heavier one.⁵⁴ But frequent changing isn't possible for everyone. Hence this dress of ours was devised: a single one adaptable to many purposes.

Innkeeper How so?

35 **Conrad** If the north wind blows or the sun grows hot, we put on our cowl; if the heat bothers us, we let the cowl hang down our backs; if we have to rest, we wear the robe full-length; if to walk, we tuck it up or even tie it around us.

Innkeeper Whoever invented this was no fool.

40 **Conrad** For living well, it's particularly important that a man accustom himself to being content with little.⁵⁵ Otherwise, if we start indulging our

fancies or being fastidious, there'll be no end to it. But no single garment with as many uses as ours could have been invented.

Innkeeper I agree.

Conrad Now let's consider decorum.⁵⁶ Tell me honestly: if you were to don
5 your wife's clothes, wouldn't everybody say you were doing something improper?⁵⁷

Innkeeper They'd call me crazy.

Conrad What would you say if she were to put on your clothes?

Innkeeper Maybe I wouldn't *say* anything against it, but I'd treat her to a
10 hell of a beating.

Conrad But what clothing you wear makes no difference.

Innkeeper In this instance it makes a lot of difference.

Conrad No wonder, for even pagan laws punish man and woman if they dress like the other sex.⁵⁸

15 **Innkeeper** Nothing wrong with those laws.

Conrad Come now: what if an old man of eighty were to dress like a youth of fifteen, or on the other hand a youth dress like an old man – wouldn't everyone say it was a case that deserved cudgelling?⁵⁹ Or if an old crone were decked out like a young girl – and the contrary?

20 **Innkeeper** I quite agree.

Conrad Likewise if a layman put on a priest's habit and contrariwise the priest put on a layman's?⁶⁰

Innkeeper Each would be guilty of indecorum.

Conrad What if a private citizen assumed the regalia of a prince, or a
25 domestic chaplain that of a bishop? Wouldn't he be doing something less than decorous?⁶¹

Innkeeper Of course.

Conrad What if a civilian put on a soldier's uniform⁶² – feathers and all the other trappings of a braggart soldier?⁶³

30 **Innkeeper** He'd be laughed at.

Conrad What if an English soldier wore a white cross, a Swiss a red one, a Frenchman a black one?⁶⁴

Innkeeper Insolent behaviour!

Conrad So why are you surprised at this outfit of ours?

35 **Innkeeper** The difference between private citizen and prince, between man and woman, I know; what the difference is between monk and non-monk, I don't know.

Conrad What's the difference between rich man and poor man?

Innkeeper Good luck.

40 **Conrad** And yet for a poor man to ape the dress of a rich man would be unseemly.

Innkeeper True – as rich men are usually dressed nowadays.

Conrad What's the difference between a fool and a wise man?⁶⁵

Innkeeper More than between rich and poor, sometimes.

Conrad Aren't fools dressed differently from wise men?

5 **Innkeeper** What suits you I don't know; but your clothing isn't very different from theirs if you added fool's ears and bells.⁶⁶

Conrad Those are missing, yes. And we're fools of this world, if only we're truly what we profess to be.⁶⁷

Innkeeper What you are, I don't know. I do know there are many fools
10 with fool's ears and bells who are wiser than the men who wear fur-lined caps, hoods,⁶⁸ and other insignia of the learned.⁶⁹ And so he who professes wisdom by his dress rather⁷⁰ than by the thing itself is in my opinion the biggest fool of all.⁷¹ I've seen a man more than fool dressed in a gown that reached to his ankles and wearing a master's hood. Judged by his looks
15 he could pass for a solemn theologian. He'd dispute before everyone, not without a show of dignity, but to the important men present he was no less amusing than any other fool, since he surpassed them all by his brand of folly.

Conrad What do you want, then – that the prince who laughs at the fool
20 change clothes with him?

Innkeeper Perhaps decorum would sometimes require what you suggest if dress were allowed to represent what is in the mind.

Conrad So you advise, yes. But I think there's a reason for fools' costume nonetheless.

25 **Innkeeper** What reason?

Conrad To keep them out of harm's way if they do or say something rashly.

Innkeeper I'll refrain from observing that this very thing⁷² is a provocation to outrage – so much so that often they turn from fools into madmen.⁷³ And I don't see why, when an ox that gores a man to death⁷⁴ or a dog or a sow that
30 kills a baby is punished, a fool who commits worse crimes is permitted to live under the protection of folly. I want to know why you're conspicuously different from other people in dress. For if there's any justification whatever for a different habit, a miller ought to dress differently from a fisherman, a seller of shoes from a clothier, a pharmacist from a wineseller, a carrier
35 from a sailor. If you're priests, why are you dressed differently from other priests? If laymen, why differently from us?

Conrad Once upon a time⁷⁵ we monks were merely the purer part of the laity, and the difference between a monk and another layman was that now existing between a thrifty and upright man who supports
40 his family by toiling with his hands and a bandit⁷⁶ boasting about the money he makes by robberies. After the Roman pontiff⁷⁷ granted us

privileges directly from himself,⁷⁸ our dress acquired a prestige which, nowadays, is that of neither laymen nor priests. Yet this dress, such as it is, is one that cardinals and popes at times have felt no reluctance to wear.⁷⁹

5 **Innkeeper** But exactly where does decorum come from?

Conrad Sometimes from the very nature of things, sometimes from human custom and opinion. Wouldn't everybody deem it absurd if someone dressed in cowhide in such a way that horns stuck out of his head and a tail dragged along the ground?

10 **Innkeeper** Ridiculous, clearly.

Conrad Again, if someone had clothing that covered his face and hands and displayed his private parts?

Innkeeper Far more absurd.

Conrad For that reason pagan writers also called attention to those who
15 wore soft or transparent garments,⁸⁰ shameful even for women. In fact it's more modest to be undressed, as we found you in the stove room,⁸¹ than to wear transparent clothes.

Innkeeper For my part, I think this whole matter of dress depends on human custom and conviction.

20 **Conrad** How so?

Innkeeper Not long ago I had guests here who affirmed that they had travelled through various lands recently discovered and missing in the maps of old cosmographers.⁸² They told of having reached an island with an extremely mild climate, where covering the body was considered the height
25 of indecency.⁸³

Conrad Perhaps those people lived like beasts.⁸⁴

Innkeeper On the contrary (according to these travellers) they led a most civilized life. They lived under a king. Him they joined in the morning's work, which lasted no longer than an hour on any single day.⁸⁵

30 **Conrad** What work did they do?

Innkeeper They picked a kind of root they used in place of wheat;⁸⁶ it's more appetizing as well as more nutritious than wheat. After doing this, each returns to his own affairs and does what he pleases. They rear their children conscientiously. They shun vices and punish them, but none more
35 severely than adultery.⁸⁷

Conrad With what punishment?

Innkeeper Women are pardoned, allowance being made for their sex, but for men guilty of adultery the penalty is this: that for the rest of their lives, whenever they appear in public, they must keep their private parts covered
40 with a cloth.

Conrad A hard punishment!

Innkeeper But custom⁸⁸ has convinced them that this is harder to bear than any punishment.

Conrad When I observe what conviction is capable of, I'm inclined to agree with you. For if one wanted to inflict on a thief or murderer the most extreme
 5 degradation, wouldn't it be enough to slit his undershirt above his buttocks and cover with wolfskin his shamefully evident private parts; paint his stockings different colours; cut to ribbons the shirt covering throat and arms, as though making a net of it; lay bare his shoulders and chest; cut part of his beard with a razor, let part of it hang down, curl part of it; cut his hair; add a
 10 cap slashed on all sides, and with a great bundle of plumes – and order him to go out in public thus attired? Wouldn't this disgrace a man more than if he were to put on a fool's cap with long flapping ears and tinkling bells?⁸⁹ And yet soldiers dress themselves up like this of their own free will and are pleased with themselves; and they find people who think it's splendid,
 15 though nothing could be more absurd.⁹⁰

Innkeeper Yes, and there are even honest citizens who imitate this with all their might.

Conrad Yet if someone tried nowadays to copy the costume of Indians, who dress themselves in birds' feathers, wouldn't all the youngsters think him
 20 mad?

Innkeeper Absolutely.

Conrad But what we even admire is far more senseless than that. Accordingly, as it is true that there is nothing too ridiculous for custom to sanction, so is it undeniable that in dress there is a certain decorum
 25 that is always decorum among the sensible and judicious; and again, an indecorum that ought to seem indecorum among all men of taste.⁹¹ For who does not smile whenever he sees women loaded down with long trains?⁹² They measure the nobility of their family by the length of the tail (though certain cardinals aren't ashamed to imitate this, at least with respect to their
 30 cloaks).⁹³ So compulsive a thing is custom, nevertheless, that neither one would be free to change what's accepted.

Innkeeper Enough of custom. But tell me: which do you think is more holy for monks, to differ or not to differ from other men in dress?⁹⁴

Conrad Well, I think it's more straightforward and more Christian not to
 35 judge anyone by his appearance, provided it's respectable and decent.

Innkeeper Then why don't you discard your cowls?

Conrad Why didn't the apostles, from the first, eat whatever food they pleased?⁹⁵

Innkeeper I don't know. You tell me.

40 **Conrad** Because inviolable custom stood in the way. What's deeply imbedded in men's minds, has been confirmed by long and general usage,

and has become, as it were, second nature cannot be abolished at a stroke without grave danger to human composure but must be removed gradually, as the man plucked the hairs of the horse's tail.⁹⁶

Innkeeper I'd allow that if all monks had the same costume. Who can put up with so many different ones?⁹⁷

Conrad Convention is responsible for this evil, as for many another.⁹⁸ Benedict did not devise a new garb; the one he and his companions used was the dress of simple, upright folk. Neither did Francis invent a new type, but his was the dress of poor men and peasants.⁹⁹ After certain additions
10 to this, his followers turned the matter into a superstition.¹⁰⁰ And don't we see even today certain old women clinging to the style of their own period, which differs more from present fashions than my garb does from yours?

Innkeeper Yes, we do.

Conrad And so when you see this outfit you see the relics of an age long passed.

Innkeeper Therefore your dress has no other sanctity?¹⁰¹

Conrad None at all.

Innkeeper Some boast that their dress was divinely revealed to them in
20 advance by the Virgin Mother.

Conrad These are men's delusions.

Innkeeper There are some who would despair of recovery from illness unless clothed in Dominican garb – nay, who wouldn't even be buried unless in Franciscan habit.¹⁰²

Conrad Whoever persuade them of that are either legacy hunters or fools; whoever believe it are superstitious. God recognizes a fool in Franciscan habit no less than one in a soldier's uniform.

Innkeeper But there's less variety in birds' feathers than in your dress.

Conrad Well, isn't it a fine thing to imitate nature? But finer to surpass her?

Innkeeper Would that you surpassed her in variety of beaks¹⁰³ too!

Conrad But come, I'll defend variety also, if you permit. Don't the Spaniard, Italian, Frenchman, Greek, Turk, Saracen dress differently?

Innkeeper Of course.

Conrad And in the same land how much variation of dress is there even
35 among persons of the same sex, age, and class! How much do Venetian, Florentine, Roman differ in appearance, and within Italy alone!

Innkeeper I believe it.

Conrad Hence our variation came about. Dominic took his habit from the honest farmers of his native part of Spain; Benedict from the peasants in his
40 native part of Italy; Francis from farmers in a different part; and likewise for the others.¹⁰⁴

Innkeeper So far as I can see, then, you're no holier than we unless you live holier lives.

Conrad Worse than you, in fact, for our wicked lives would shock simple souls more deeply.

- 5 **Innkeeper** Is there any hope for us, then, who have neither patron saint, nor distinctive dress, nor rule, nor profession of vows?

Conrad Yes! And see that you hold to it, my good friend. Ask your sponsors what you professed in baptism.¹⁰⁵ Ask them what garment you received there. And do you who professed the rule of the gospel

- 10 hanker after a human rule? Do you, who have Jesus Christ as protector, hanker after a patron saint? Did you profess nothing when you married? Think what you owe to wife, children, household, and you will realize you have a heavier burden than if you had taken Franciscan vows.

- 15 **Innkeeper** Do you believe any innkeeper can get into heaven?¹⁰⁶

Conrad Why not?

Innkeeper Many things are said and done in this inn that scarcely accord with the gospel.

Conrad What?

- 20 **Innkeeper** One man drinks too much, another talks bawdy, some quarrel, some slander; finally, whether the rest of the doings here are innocent, I don't know.

Conrad You ought to remedy this as much as you can. If you can't do that, at least you should not foster or invite these evils for the sake of profit.

- 25 **Innkeeper** Sometimes I cheat in the wine.

Conrad How so?

Innkeeper When I notice people are tipsy, I mix a lot of water with it.

Conrad Well, that's more venial than selling the public wine tainted with dangerous drugs.

- 30 **Innkeeper** Tell me seriously, how many days have you been on this journey?

Conrad Almost a month.

Innkeeper Who takes care of you all this time?

Conrad Aren't men with wife, children, parents, and kin well taken care of?

Innkeeper Often they are.

- 35 **Conrad** You have only one wife, we a hundred; you have but a single father, we a hundred; you have but a single home, we a hundred; you have but a few children, we have countless ones; you have but a few relatives, we an infinite number.

Innkeeper How so?

- 40 **Conrad** Because spiritual kinship reaches further than that of flesh and blood. So Christ promised us,¹⁰⁷ and we find his promise is true.

Innkeeper Really, you've been very good company for me. Damned if I don't prefer this conversation to a drinking bout with my pastor.¹⁰⁸ Do us the honour of preaching tomorrow.¹⁰⁹ And if you happen to travel this way hereafter, be assured there's a place here ready for you.

5 **Conrad** What if others should come?

Innkeeper They won't be unwelcome, provided they're like you.

Conrad Better, I hope.

Innkeeper But how shall I recognize the good sort among so many bad ones?

10 **Conrad** I'll tell you briefly but confidentially.

Innkeeper Tell me.¹¹⁰

Conrad [*Whispers.*]

Innkeeper I'll remember and do it.

NOTES

- 1 Apparently the word translated 'Well-to-do Beggars' (Πτωχοπλούσιοι) was coined by Erasmus. Writing to Melanchthon in 1520, he refers to Franciscans as πτωχοτύραννοι 'beggarly tyrants,' another of his inventions (Allen Ep 1113:38; later at 1144:21, 2485:11).
- 2 The conduct of a Franciscan monk with the same name in 'The Funeral' (767:35-775:18) is much inferior to this friar's. St Bernardine of Siena (1380-1444) was a renowned Franciscan preacher and reformer.
- 3 'Pandocheus,' a transliteration of the Greek term
- 4 Rom 12:13; Heb 13:2; 1 Pet 4:9. Mendicant friars were dependent upon the charity of fellow Christians. As Observant Franciscans, members of the stricter branch of the order, these two friars seeking a lodging are not permitted to have money or other personal property. The ideals and complexities, successes and failures of professed Franciscan standards are mentioned and judged by Erasmus in two later colloquies, 'The Sermon' and 'The Seraphic Funeral'; see the introduction to the latter. Some remarks on friars in 'The Funeral' are likewise relevant. In those colloquies, and in other writings, Erasmus makes sharply critical judgments of Franciscan claims. But the two Franciscans in the present dialogue are worthy friars, a credit to the best traditions of the order and to the Rule of St Francis, in every respect superior to the rude village priest who drives them from his door. Mendicant friars had for generations been at odds with secular clergy over the right to preach and to hear confessions in their parishes. Anti-mendicant polemics date back to the thirteenth century and gave rise to a major academic dispute over the rights of 'dominion' in the century following. Friars' exemption from episcopal jurisdiction and their popularity as preachers and confessors, wherever and whenever they were allowed to be such, were resented by their rivals and aroused animosity at times in towns and in universities.
Of the numerous accounts of Franciscans and their role in medieval and early sixteenth-century ecclesiastical and social history, the best in English is

Moorman. The mendicant orders are treated by F. Vernet *Les ordres mendiants* (Paris 1933). On Franciscans in Germany in Erasmus' time consult P.L. Nyhus *Franciscans in South Germany 1400–1530: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* new series 65 part 8 (1975) 3–48; in England, Knowles ROE II and III; on their activities in the New World, Bataillon *Erasmus y España*.

- 5 *lupos* . . . *lupas*; the feminine form was a synonym for prostitutes (hence *lupanar*, a brothel).
- 6 His family (as in 'The Old Men's Chat' 454:27–8). A man who lived unmarried was by definition celibate, but the practical question for Erasmus and other moralists was whether a celibate cleric was also continent and chaste or lived with a concubine. In the western church celibacy was imposed by councils and papal decrees as early as the fourth century, but with what effectiveness cannot be measured accurately. Scandals of fornication, adultery, and worse certainly occurred. So did honourable but irregular unions. On celibacy of the clergy to c 500 see *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* ed Fernand Cabrol et al (Paris 1907–) II part 2 2802–2832; *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* ed A. Vacant et al, 15 vols (Paris 1903–50) II 2068–88, which takes the subject as far as the First Lateran Council (1123); E. Vacandard in *Etudes de critique et d'histoire religieuse* (Paris 1906) 69–120; H.C. Lea *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church* (Philadelphia 1867; 4th ed rev London 1932); Surtz *Praise of Wisdom* 130–8; C.A. Frazee 'The Origins of Clerical Celibacy in the Western Church' *Church History* 41 (1972) 149–67; *Sacerdoce et célibat* ed J. Coppens (Gembloux and Louvain 1971). In the twelfth century marriage could still be tolerated in certain circumstances (see Etienne Gilson *Héloïse and Abélard* [introduction 468 above] chapter 1, although the First Lateran Council in 1123 forbade clerics in major orders to have concubines (canons 7 and 21; Tanner I 191 and 194) and the Second Lateran Council of 1139 specified that violators were to be deprived of function and benefice (canon 6; Tanner I 198). Similarly the Third Lateran Council of 1179 (canon 11; Tanner I 217–18), the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 (constitution 14, On punishing clerical incontinence; Tanner I 242), the Council of Basel (session 20 [1435] [Decree on concubinaries]; Tanner I 485–7), and in Erasmus' day the Fifth Lateran Council (session 9 [1514] [Bull on reform of the curia], Reform of the curia and of other things; Tanner I 622–3).

Clerical incontinence and concubinage continued to be common subjects of censure by moralists, though such a sensitive and severe critic as Colet thought concubinage less odious than clerical avarice and pride (Allen Ep 1211:467–8 / CWE Ep 1211:508–10). Erasmus rejected the customary assumptions about the superiority of celibacy, including sacerdotal celibacy, to Christian marriage for most men. As for incontinent clerics, how much better it would be – for priests, their concubines, and their offspring – to make legitimate wives of the concubines if this could be done (*Encomium matrimonii* LB I 419E; see the introduction to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 279–81). Everyone knows how many clerics lead impure lives; if they cannot remain continent, it would be better to allow the remedy of marriage (*Annotaciones in Novum Testamentum* [on 1 Tim 3:2] LB VI 934B–C); *Supputatio* LB IX 485D–E; *Appendix ad antapologiam Sutoris* ibidem 814A; *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* ibidem 924D–925E; Allen Epp 1459:94–9, 1620:50–2 / CWE Epp 1477b:106–112,

1620:58–60. When advising the magistrates of Basel c January 1525, after a serious outbreak of Lutheran activity in Zürich, Erasmus' opinion was that worthy priests who could not persevere in continence should be permitted to marry and to continue as priests; unworthy priests who refused to give up their concubines should be permitted to marry but compelled to become laymen (Allen Ep 1539:134–6, 143–59 / CWE Ep 1539:143–4, 152–72). In September 1526 he told a correspondent, 'I do not allow marriage for priests, nor do I relax vows for monks, unless that be done by authority of pontiffs for the strengthening of the church, not for its destruction' (Allen Ep 1744:81–8). To John Longland, bishop of Lincoln, he wrote in September 1528, 'What would Augustine say now if he saw the many monasteries which are no different from public brothels?' (Allen Ep 2037:202–8). Writing in May 1529 to Alonso de Fonseca, archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain, he contrasts Augustine's behaviour towards his concubine with that of modern clerics (Allen Ep 2157:35–8). On another occasion he corrects a correspondent's misunderstanding of the word *coelibatus* (Allen Ep 2675:1–4). In April 1533, nearly two years before his death, he received a letter from Christoph von Stadion, bishop of Augsburg, expressing strong approval of clerical marriage (Allen Ep 2787:53–69). Luther's hostility to monasticism and his often enunciated opinions on the superiority of marriage for clergy and religious are well known (see 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' n1). His own marriage in June 1525 to a former nun, Katherine von Bora, interested Erasmus, who repeated a scandalous but false rumour, which he later retracted, that the bride became a mother a few days after the wedding (Allen Epp 1633:11–16, 1653:6–8, 1655:2–5 / CWE Epp 1633:17–19, 1653:7–9, 1655:2–5, Allen Ep 1677:1–2). More was horrified by clergy who 'under the name of matrimony, lyve in sacrylege and incestuose lechery as frere Luther doth'; *Apology* (1533) ed J.B. Trapp, Yale CWM 9 93:12–13.

In 'The Funeral' a friar taunts the village priest by telling him to 'find out what your wife and bastards are doing at home' (768:22). Children of concubines were treated as illegitimate. The Council of Basel (1435) decreed that they must not live with their fathers ([Decree on concubinaries]; Tanner 1 487). One of Cromwell's visitors to the monasteries, referring to the prior of Maiden Bradley in Wiltshire, speaks of 'an holy father prior, and hath but vj. children, and but one dowghter mariede yet of the goodes of the monasterie, trystyng shortly to mary the reste. His sones be tale men waittyng upon hym, and he thankes Gode a never medelet with marytt women, but all with madens the faireste cowlde be gottyn, and always mareded them ryght well. The pope, consideryng his fragilitie, gave hym licens to kepe an hore, and hath goode writyng *sub plumbo* to discharge his conscience' (*Letters Relating to the Suppression of Monasteries* ed Thomas Wright, Camden Society 1st series 26 [London 1843] 58).

7 Cf 475:38–9 and n51 below.

8 Not merely a well-known sign but a hint to knowledgeable travellers that the inn had a dirty kitchen (J. Larwood and John C. Hotten *The History of Signboards* [London 1866] 443–4)

9 *perfricanda frons*, proverbial; *Adagia* 1 viii 47

10 *Adagia* II vii 2

11 See 'Inns' n9.

12 Similar advice is given in 'A Pilgrimage' 649:37–9.

- 13 Conrad's word is *spiritus*. The innkeeper's is *animus*, which is often synonymous with *spiritus* but also connotes 'mind' and 'purpose' or 'disposition.'
- 14 The stricter Franciscans, as compared with Conventuals. By papal decision in 1517 all Franciscan congregations were divided into these two independent bodies. See further 'A Note on Franciscan Poverty' 1026–32.
- 15 Not only did good Observants not carry money, they did not even touch it; cf 472:18 below and 'The Seraphic Funeral' 1009:36–1011:11.
- 16 'When the fox preaches, beware the geese' (Tilley F656, F643); 'It is a blind goose that comes to a fox's sermon' (G358).
- 17 'A wolf in sheep's clothing,' the metaphor so familiar in Aesop and in Matt 7:15, is here given an anticlerical interpretation.
- 18 The ape in emblematic literature is a symbol of covetousness and lust.
- 19 See *Adagia* III i 60, on 'clothes make the man.'
- 20 *operam opera pensans*; cf *Adagia* I i 35.
- 21 See n15 above.
- 22 Proverbial (Tilley W606), but not in *Adagia*
- 23 The usual excuse of mendicants; Allen Ep 2700:93
- 24 A commonplace; *Adagia* I iv 87
- 25 In January (475:1–4 below)
- 26 *deprecatricem* (feminine form, from Tertullian *Adversus Marcionem* 4.12 [CSEL 47 454:22], of *deprecator*, a legal term)
- 27 Because he knows or has heard of women who are too friendly with friars
- 28 See 'The Funeral' and 'The Seraphic Funeral.'
- 29 *scurras et sanniones*. In 'Inns' they are said to be a nuisance to weary travellers (374:36–9).
- 30 *concionatrix*; cf n26 above.
- 31 As a sensible man will when his wife urges him to end a quarrel (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 688f–689b)
- 32 Matt 10:10; Mark 6:8; Luke 9:3, 10:4
- 33 share] *communicemus*. The first edition read *commutemus* 'exchange.'
- 34 *apophoretis* 'going-away gifts,' as in 'The Godly Feast' 203:29
- 35 Commenting in 1532 on criticism by Franciscans, Erasmus contrasts individuals who humbly seek hospitality with mendicants who 'roam up and down the world' and burst into houses whether they are welcome or not (Allen Ep 2700:109–23).
- 36 On friars' begging see *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 172E–174F. Poverty is fitting for Christ; begging detracts from his dignity. There is no excuse for begging except unavoidable necessity. Truly the requirement is foolish if begging is part of Franciscan perfection. Christ was kind to the needy, yet careful not to beg himself, and from time to time sends the apostles to buy food. We do not read that the apostles begged. 'In my opinion, those who voluntarily embrace poverty should not be scorned, provided they do so to make ready and proclaim the kingdom of God; but poverty is to be condemned if it interferes with that. I would willingly concede leisure to those who prepare themselves zealously to preach the word of God. But whether those who only sing in choir deserve this leisure, I leave for others to judge.' In *Utopia* mendicant friars are denounced by one speaker as the worst of vagabonds (Yale CWM 4 82:20). An example of vehement hostility to them by one of More's contemporaries can be read in Simon Fish *A Supplication for*

the Beggars (1529) ed Edward Arber, English Scholars' Library (London 1878; repr 1973).

- 37 For receiving gifts. On precautions against touching money offered to them see 'The Seraphic Funeral' 1009:36–1011:11.
- 38 See 'The Old Men's Chat' 458:20–6 and n74.
- 39 The text of a very interesting disputation between Franciscan theologians and Luther, Melancthon, and other members of the theological faculty at Wittenberg in October 1519 contains candid criticism of the Franciscans and defence by the friars of their work. The text, rediscovered in recent years, appears in two articles by Gerhard Hammer, '*Militia Franciscana seu Militia Christi*' ARG 69 (1978) 51–80 and 70 (1979) 59–104. Some parts of the debate are strikingly relevant to pages of the present colloquy; for example ARG 69 75–6, where Melancthon asks questions that would have pleased the innkeeper.
- 40 Matt 6:31, 33; Luke 12:22, 31. Cf 'The Godly Feast' 200:31–3, 202:31.
- 41 'The religion of Christians today does not depend on miracles,' wrote Erasmus to a bishop in 1528, when protesting against unscrupulous clerics who for the sake of gain deceive people by faked miracles (Allen Ep 2037:85–9). For other reasons he puts a similar assertion about miracles into the mouths of his Lutheran opponents in *De libero arbitrio* (LB IX 1220B). For still other reasons his Julius II calls miracles 'old-fashioned stuff' in *Julius exclusus* (Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 71:136–7 / CWE 27 171).
- 42 A common failing of German priests, according to 'Youth' 95:33–4; and see 475:18, 29–31 below.
- 43 The date is 17 January. Antony (c 250–350) of Egypt, hermit and reputed founder of monasticism; in art he is shown with a pig, symbolic of the sins of gluttony and sensuality which he overcame. He is also associated with fire or flame (see 'A Pilgrimage' 628:8–9 and n40) and sometimes carries a bell ('A Fish Diet' 719:24–6 and n328).
- 44 Probably a recollection of Jerome Ep 57.12 PL 22 579, who says that he who claims to imitate the style of the apostles should first imitate their virtue. A favourite theme of Erasmus; *Enchiridion* LB V 31C–D / Holborn 74:22–5 / CWE 66 71–2; 'A Pilgrimage' 634:13–16; 'A Fish Diet' 719:12–31; *De concordia* LB V 501F–502A.
- 45 'A Fish Diet' 707:25–708:11 describes scandalous carousings in a village on Palm Sunday.
- 46 *mutum ac malum*. In medieval writings the phrase 'dumb dogs' (the *canes muti* of Isa 56:10: 'they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark') was a standard epithet used of pastors who could not or would not preach. Preaching had once been primarily the duty of bishops; no other person could preach without episcopal authority. If in later times priests were incompetent or negligent in preaching, the bishop or his ordinaries were derelict in their duties. Reformers never tired of deploring such clerics. Tyndale was one of many in the early sixteenth century who condemned parish priests because they 'can but minister a sort of dumb ceremonies' (*Obedience of a Christian Man* in *Works* I [PS 42] 148). Emphasis on preaching became a familiar feature of Reformation and Protestantism, even identified at times with Protestantism. But such emphasis does not permit us to disregard or underestimate the importance of preaching in earlier generations. In the province of Westphalia alone, we are told, at least 10,000 sermons, mostly of the fifteenth century, survived in incunabula. Of

Luther's, 2,300 are in print in whole or in part. See E.C. Keesling *The Early Sermons of Luther and Their Relation to the Pre-Reformation Sermon* (Grand Rapids 1935; repr New York 1971) 17, 42, 49 and passim. Luther's sermons are indexed in WA 22. What is known of late medieval preaching, and what survives of the sermons, homilies, *exempla*, and *artes praedicandi* both in manuscript and in print, are enough to warn us against taking the situation in this colloquy, where the village priest is too lax or too ignorant to preach, as typical of all or most towns and cities or the more fortunate villages. See Bernd Moeller 'Piety in Germany around 1500' trans Joyce Irwin in *The Reformation in Medieval Perspective* ed Steven Ozment (Chicago 1971) 60. There had always been good and even great preachers. But how many, and how can their effectiveness be measured? It is clear that conscientious churchmen never doubted that preaching might and ought to be improved. Bishops, priests, and monks were plentiful, good preachers scarce (Allen Ep 1800:221–5). In general, the fifteenth century saw an upsurge of interest in preaching, with marked effect in England and on the continent, and in the use of the Bible and of patristic example in the formation of preachers. See Hervé Martin *Le métier du prédicateur à la fin du moyen âge, 1350–1520* (Paris 1988); Larissa Taylor *Soldiers of Christ: Preaching in Late Medieval and Reformation France* (New York and Oxford 1992); J.I. Catto 'Wyclif and Wycliffism at Oxford 1356–1430' in *The History of the University of Oxford II Late Medieval Oxford* ed J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans (Oxford 1992; repr with corrections 1995) 257–9.

The bull *Supernae maiestatis praesidio*, eight years before Erasmus' colloquy was printed, ordains that no clerics, secular or regular, to whom the office of preaching pertains be allowed to preach without having first been examined by superiors and found competent morally and in knowledge. (Obviously the village priest in this colloquy would have failed the test.) Those who satisfy the examiners may preach, taking care to explain the truth of Scripture in accordance with the interpretations of the Doctors of the church and without presuming to vary from their teachings. They must avoid predicting the exact time of coming evils or the Day of Judgment or represent that they have divine revelation about such matters. Should preachers actually receive, by divine inspiration, knowledge of what will happen in the church, such knowledge must be reserved to the consideration of the Holy See before being preached. If this cannot be done, it must at least be submitted to local ecclesiastical authorities and examined by them, with the aid of learned and prudent men, who may decide the case (Fifth Lateran Council, session 11 [1516]; Tanner I 634–8). The duty of preachers is to preach the gospel, to instil a love of goodness and hatred of wickedness. Finally they are admonished to abstain from the 'scandalous practice of defaming the character of bishops, prelates, and other superiors before the people.'

Erasmus knew and admired good preachers, such as Colet and Vitrier; see Ep 1211 and A. Godin *L'homélaire de Jean Vitrier* (Geneva 1971). Erasmus describes some preachers who were too ostentatiously dramatic (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 985B–987E). One whom he singles out for praise but does not name may have been Michel Menot, a notably successful Franciscan preacher in the early sixteenth century. Like others, Menot preached in the vernacular, but Latin versions of some of his sermons are extant and in print; see *Sermons choisis* (1508–1518) ed Joseph Nève (Paris 1924). They are analysed by Etienne Gilson

in *Les idées et les lettres* (Paris 1955) 93–154. Many of Gerson's sermons are extant; see *Oeuvres* v (Latin) and vii part 2 (French). On Erasmus' *Ecclesiastes*, his most important contribution to the subject, the best treatment to date is Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* II 1053–1155; on sacred rhetoric see also John W. O'Malley 'Erasmus and the History of Sacred Rhetoric: The *Ecclesiastes* of 1535' *ERSY* 5 (1985) 1–29. For a contemporary aid see Rudolf Hirsch 'Surgant's List of Recommended Books for Preachers 1502–03' *Renaissance Quarterly* 20 (1967) 199–210.

Problems with preaching and preachers continued to receive official attention. The Council of Trent in 1546 and 1563 enjoined that if anyone expected to preach treated the fulfilment of this duty with contempt, he was to be punished severely. For preaching must not be neglected (Decree on instruction and preaching, nos 9–17 and Decree on reform, canon 4; Tanner II 669–70 and 763). The Second Vatican Council (1962–5) emphasized the importance of preaching in missionary activities (*The Documents of Vatican II* ed Walter M. Abbott [New York 1966] 591–2). Priestly preaching is acknowledged there to be 'often very difficult in the circumstances of the modern world' but must 'apply the perennial truth of the gospel to the concrete circumstances of life' (Abbott 539–40). Erasmus felt much the same about his own 'modern world.'

The innkeeper may not have heard his pastor preach, but they are not strangers (483:2 below). Tavern-haunting and drinking there, card-playing, dicing, and hunting were common clerical dissipations, repeatedly denounced not only because of their perils to the moral probity required of priests and religious but because indulgence in them involved the keeping of bad company and so compromised the dignity – to say no more – of the priesthood. The preacher must practise what he preaches. Writing of preachers, Erasmus asks 'Who will believe one who, while he praises chastity and sobriety, keeps concubines at home and is often the worse for liquor in drinking bouts?' (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 790B). A copious anthology of such scenes of clerical life could be made from Erasmus' letters and the *Colloquies*. He does not, however, confuse lapses in behaviour, lamentable as these are, with the really vicious manifestations of avarice, hypocrisy, or slander. For typical censure of clerical vice Clichtove's *De vita et moribus sacerdotum* (Paris 1520) is instructive. Chapters 20–2 stress the importance of chastity and denounce fornication (a mortal sin, he insists; see 210–59 in the Cracow 1608 edition). On Clichtove see the introduction to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 280–1. G.G. Coulton *Five Centuries of Religion* 4 vols (Cambridge 1923–50) deals with the shortcomings of monks; examples of friars' delinquency in Knowles ROE are limited to England but are not unusual. Dean Colet's impressive convocation sermon of 1512 (repr in appendix to Lupton's *Life of Colet* 293–304) was a candid assessment of clerical shortcomings; there are too many others to be counted. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) had explicitly censured and forbidden clerical drunkenness, gambling, and visits to taverns (constitutions 15, 16; Tanner I 242–3). Likewise it forbade hunting and the keeping of hounds for this purpose, a prohibition the authorities never succeeded in enforcing. On hunting see Claus Uhlig "'The Sobbing Deer': As You Like It, II.i.21–66 and the Historical Context' *Renaissance Drama* 3 (1970) 79–109 and 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' n7.

- 47 Among the grievances presented by the lay estates at the Diet of Nürnberg in 1523 was a strong denunciation of priests and religious who mingled with

common folk in taverns, wore swords and ridiculous clothing, and provoked laymen to riot and disorder (Kidd *Documents* 120 no 61 [90]). In *Adagia* III v 98 Erasmus says that monks who wear the dress of their order in public but in private that of soldiers are as ridiculous as Bacchus wearing a lion-skin). In 1524 the League of Regensburg, organized by the papal legate, Cardinal Lorenzo Campeggi, to institute reforms, commanded all men in sacred orders to avoid public taverns except when travel compelled them to stop there. They were strictly enjoined to avoid drunkenness in such places (Kidd *Documents* 144 no 73 [2, 3]).

- 48 Not because the publican is uninterested in sermons (483:2–3 below) but because the local priest is too lazy or too ignorant to preach. How frequently preaching occurred in late medieval parish churches is not easy to determine, but see the works of Martin and Taylor cited in n46 above. The answer may depend on what sort of place – city, town, or village – the church was in, whether it was near a monastery or was often visited by friars, whether the bishop of the diocese enforced or neglected clerical obligations to preach. By medieval English ecclesiastical law, for example, a parish priest had to expound four times a year, in the vernacular language, the articles of faith and moral precepts necessary *ad salutem* (William Lyndwood *Provinciale* [1443] 1 tit 11 cap 1; in the edition of Oxford 1679 [repr Farnborough, England 1968] page 54). (Lyndwood was echoing the earlier and well-known canon 9 [*Ignorantia sacerdotum*] of the Constitutions of the Province of Canterbury promulgated by John Pecham in 1281.) This may have been the common or general standard in many regions, but whether it was universal practice is more than doubtful, as complaints about lack of preaching confirm. St Ignatius Loyola, writing from Rome in December 1538, says that one reason the sermons he and his followers had been preaching were well attended was that ‘in this region it is the custom to preach only in Lent and Advent’ (*Autobiography with Related Documents* trans Joseph F. O’Callaghan, ed John C. Olin [New York 1974] 98). The priest in this colloquy does not preach often. The next town might be fortunate enough to have a true pastor, devout and learned, ‘That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche; / His parissshens devoutly wolde he teche’ (*Canterbury Tales* General Prologue 481–2). Every generation had its renowned preachers, but what the modern reader is likely to notice when proceeding from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century is complaint about failure of secular priests to preach. On England, consult J.W. Blench *Preaching in England in the Late Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Oxford 1964); on the earlier period G.R. Owst *Preaching in Medieval England* (Cambridge 1926); *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Cambridge 1933). The modern requirement that priests having cure of souls must preach on all Sundays and solemn festival days seems to date from the Council of Trent (session 5 [1546], Second decree: on instruction and preaching, no 11 and session 24 [1563] Decree on reform, canon 4; Tanner II 669 and 763). Preaching was one of the principal activities of friars, especially Franciscans and Dominicans. When the papacy had freed these mendicant orders from the jurisdiction of bishops, making them responsible only to the Holy See and the heads of their own orders, they were more free to preach. The Council of Vienne (1311–12), ruling in accordance with decisions of Pope Boniface VIII, endeavoured to mitigate quarrels between regular and secular clergy by

decreeing that Dominicans and Franciscans might preach in public places but not in parochial churches without permission of the parish priest (decree [10]; Tanner 1 365–9). Nor could they act as confessors in a parish unless invited to do so. The ordinance of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), that all Christians must confess their sins at least once a year to their own parish priest, even if they confessed them to another also, remained in force (constitution 21, *Omnis utriusque sexus*; Tanner 1 245). The friars became popular preachers and confessors, notably in the cities, a reputation for which, however, they are castigated by the priest in 'The Funeral' (768:25–769:3). Some Franciscan sermons of the early sixteenth century are reviewed in A.J. Krailsheimer *Rabelais and the Franciscans* (Oxford 1963) chapters 3–6; see also E.V. Telle 'En marge de l'éloquence sacrée aux xv^e–xvi^e siècles: Erasme et fra Roberto Caracciolo' BHR 43 (1981) 449–70 and 'A Fish Diet' n219.

- 49 Even if he was unlearned, a literate priest could conduct divine service and administer the sacraments. This we would consider, as the priest in the colloquy evidently does, his principal duty (Moeller 'Piety in Germany around 1500' [n46 above] 63). Whether he was a bachelor of a university (the parish priest in 'The Funeral' is not; see 768:37) or could pass an examination, and then could or would preach satisfactorily, was another question, and one long troublesome to reformers – never more so than in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In *Ecclesiastes* Erasmus tells a story about David of Burgundy, bishop of Utrecht (d 1496), who was examining three hundred candidates for ordination. Very few of these, he was informed, were 'educated' (*qui scirent litteras*, meaning Latin). After asking them some appropriate questions he concluded that only three of the three hundred were fit to be ordained, though later, when this severity was strongly protested by others, he felt compelled to tolerate the rest despite their incompetence (LB v 808B–E). Erasmus does not divulge the source of this anecdote. He himself was ordained by Bishop David on 25 April 1492. Was he one of the three who passed the examination on the occasion he describes? If bishops have burdensome administrative duties and must yield to princes' demands on their time, they ought at least to require and to provide a proper training in letters for ordinands, in order that these may afterwards preach (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 808D–E, 830C–D). A letter from Edward Lee, archbishop of York (1531–44) and formerly a keen critic of Erasmus, observes that many benefices pay so little that no man of learning will take them, adding that he does not know a dozen men in his diocese who can preach (*Original Letters Illustrative of English History* ed Henry Ellis, 3rd series, 4 vols [London 1846; repr New York 1979] II 338). On clerical education, or lack of it, and preaching see G.G. Coulton *Medieval Panorama* (Cambridge 1938) chapters 12, 16, 49–50; Peter Heath *English Parish Clergy on the Eve of the Reformation* (London and Toronto 1969), especially chapters 5 and 6; and the works on the history of preaching mentioned in nn46 and 48 above. Heath's investigation of the wills of parish clergy in Norfolk between 1500 and 1550 showed that books were mentioned in 158 out of 869. Seventeen mentioned Bibles; a few with commentaries, all of these medieval. There is no sign of awareness of what had happened in biblical scholarship in that half century (86–92). Yet we hear also of a village curé near Antwerp who in 1538 left 150 books, among them at least twenty-nine works by Erasmus, including the *Colloquies* (Philip Lefèvre 'La lecture des oeuvres

d'Erasmus au sein du bas clergé durant la première moitié du xvi^e siècle' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* 1 85–91). Erasmus knew and wrote of many kinds of clergy, ignorant and learned, lazy and dedicated, immoral and upright. In the *Colloquies* we meet both kinds, but more who are censured than praised. The impression of a reader who has read all of his writings and studied his society is likely to be that his concern and that of other reformers in these matters was well founded. Preaching was and had always been an episcopal responsibility, but was now too commonly dodged or evaded and assigned to others. This in itself was not so surprising, but too often secular clergy as well as prelates were negligent. At long last the Council of Trent decreed in 1563 the establishment of seminaries in every diocese for the training of youths twelve years of age and older for the ministry. Preference was to be given to sons of the poor (Decree on reform, canon 18; Tanner II 750–3). In the long run this decision was as important as any made by the council. Before universities existed bishops were the sole source of theological instruction for future priests (*Epistola contra pseudevangelicos* LB x 1586D–E). Henceforth there would be training centres for them as well as theological faculties in universities for advanced study.

- 50 *Adagia* I x 72. Erasmus knew the saying from Jerome Ep 7.5 (cf 127:9). Jerome does not refer to Isa 24:2 'as with the people, so with the priest.'
- 51 Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester and later lord chancellor, writes that when friars preached in places where they were not well known they took pains to bark at the bishop and parish priest, 'or some pretty conceit to entertayne the audience,' for otherwise it was impossible to keep their attention. Friars at least knew how to preach; the priests were incompetent to do so (*Letters* 315). For an anecdote about Gardiner and Erasmus see 'The Godly Feast' n104 above.
- 52 Cf 'Faith' 423:9–10 for another military term adopted by soldiers of Christ.
- 53 The explanation that follows invites comparison with the defence of a Cynic philosopher's clothing in the opening pages of Lucian's *Cynicus* 1–2, a dialogue translated by More and printed with other translations of Lucian by him and Erasmus in 1506; on Erasmus and Lucian see the introduction to these volumes xxviii and n28.
- 54 In *Ecclesiastes* LB v 1039A Erasmus comments on the coolness of summer evenings in Rome.
- 55 In conformity with the practice of St Francis, his followers wore simple, mean clothing. See 'The Seraphic Funeral,' especially nn18 and 76.
- 56 What is accepted and valued as appropriate and proper, whether because prescribed by tradition and usage or sanctioned by religion or law. 'What is proper is right and what is right is proper' (Cicero *De officiis* 1.94), a dictum expressing a fundamental conviction common to the Hebrew book of Proverbs, classical ethics, and standard manuals of behaviour in every age. Decorum governs dress, manners, and speech as well as morals. See 'The Council of Women' 909:22–910:27; *Ecclesiastes* LB v 966F–967A; and *De civilitate* (cf the introduction to 'Manners' 70).
- 57 *Apophthegmata* LB IV 133B; *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 684C
- 58 An abomination in Mosaic law (Deut 22:5) and inherently absurd (*De copia* LB I 8A–B / CWE 24 306:12–13)

- 59 *fustuario*: clubbing to death, a Roman military punishment
- 60 See n97 below.
- 61 With these and the following examples of unlikely changes of costume compare the complaints in 'The Council of Women' 909:22–910:5.
- 62 A Franciscan who did so would be branded an apostate (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 684c). But allusions to this sort of behaviour occur; see n47 above.
- 63 *stultitiae Thrasonicae insignia*. Thraso is the boastful soldier in Terence *Eunuchus*. On soldiers' dress see 480:4–15 and n88 below.
- 64 The proper colour for English would be red, for Swiss white, for French yellow.
- 65 Lines 2–18 are an epitome of topics treated in Erasmus' most popular book, *Moriae encomium*.
- 66 A description repeated at line 10 and at 480:12. Cf 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 289:10–11; Allen Ep 447:252–4 / CWE Ep 447:274–7. See Holbein's drawing of Folly in LB IV 503–4.
- 67 Cf 1 Cor 1:20.
- 68 *epomides*, here academic capes or hoods (as in the reference to 'a master's hood' a few lines below), a transliteration of a Greek word from the Septuagint text of Exod 28:6, Lev 8:7 (in *Ecclesiastes* LB v 794f defined as *superhumerales*). The word is not in the Vulgate; C. DuCange *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae Latinitatis* 6 vols (Paris 1733–6) cites only Erasmus for this term. On hoods and other features of academic dress see Hastings A. Rashdall *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (Oxford 1895), 2nd rev ed F.M. Powicke and A.B. Emden, 3 vols (Oxford 1936) III 385–91.
- 69 That academic regalia do not guarantee erudition and wisdom was a conviction as satisfying to Erasmus' generation as to others. See 'Patterns' 21:30–2; Allen Ep 145:109–16 / CWE Ep 145:125–33; *Moriae encomium* LB IV 470c–471A / ASD IV-3 158:513–23 / CWE 27 130. In *Enchiridion* he derides theologians who pride themselves on the title *magister*, which Christ expressly forbids in Matt 23:10–11 (LB v 49A–B / Holborn 197:8–15 / CWE 66 101). *Magistri nostri* was used especially of Paris and Louvain theologians (*De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 374D–E / ASD I-2 295:4–13 / CWE 25 62). Erasmus was fond of a burlesque in the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* (lvi–lxviii, 291–4) of 'learned' scholars who at a dinner party argue about variations of the phrase *magister noster*. Erasmus says he could almost recite the text from memory (*Spongia* LB X 164of).
- 70 rather . . . itself] Added in the March 1533 edition
- 71 The Paris theologians disliked this sentence, but Erasmus calls attention to Conrad's refutation of it. Anyway it has nothing to do with the Catholic faith (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 948D).
- 72 The fact that they wear a distinctive costume
- 73 More's Utopians are fond of fools and treat them kindly (*Utopia* Yale cwm 4 192:7–14, 485). On More's own household fool, Henry Patenson, see R.W. Chambers *Thomas More* (London 1935; repr Ann Arbor 1958, Brighton 1982) 179, 311. At Leicester Abbey in 1528, it is reported, the abbot kept a fool who accompanied him to choir and distracted the canons (Knowles ROE III 67). Another, at Walsingham Priory (1514), had a fool who was admitted to communion (*Visitations of the Diocese of Norwich* ed A. Jessopp, Camden Society new series 43 [London 1888] 115, 120). Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*,

which begins with an ironic rhetorical encomium of folly and ends with an impassioned defence of the Christian wisdom of much so-called foolishness, is an acknowledged classic, but Erasmus himself did not share More's liking for jesters, domestic or other kinds.

- 74 Exod 21:28. See E.P. Evans *Criminal Prosecution and Capital Punishment of Animals* (London 1906; repr 1987); J.G. Frazer *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament* 3 vols (London 1918) III 415–45; J.J. Finkelstein 'The Ox That Gored' *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 71 part 2 (1981) 5–89.
- 75 With these contrasts between ancient and modern monks compare *Modus orandi Deum* (1524) LB V 1129A–B; *De pronuntiatione* LB I 922D / CWE 26 386; see also 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' n57; 'The Funeral' 768:30–6.
- 76 *snaphanum*. On this word, adapted from German, see Allen Ep 1209:7n.
- 77 Since many popes were patrons of the Franciscans, which one is meant is uncertain. If, as seems likely, Conrad refers to a pope who aided the order in its early days, Honorius III (on whom see the next note) may be intended. A fairly recent pope, Sixtus IV, by an indulgence of 1479, allowed all persons who were granted 'letters of fraternity' – conferring a special association with the order – eligibility for special privileges, for example to choose their own confessors and obtain plenary absolution for sins (see Moorman 514–16). For other allusions to papal relations with the orders see *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* (1531) LB IX 1147B–C and 'The Seraphic Funeral,' especially the 'Note on Franciscan Poverty' 1026–32.
- 78 Innocent III approved the original Rule (not extant) of St Francis in 1210. His successor, Honorius III, approved the third and final (and still authoritative) version in 1223. Honorius III is said also to have given the Franciscan order the indulgence available to pilgrims who visited the chapel of Portiuncula, the village near Assisi where Francis had his headquarters. (On the Rule, Moorman 15–19, 29–30, 51–2, 55–8; on the indulgence 30, 155.) In a letter of 1516 Erasmus remarks that when Franciscan statutes are relaxed by papal authority, the friars deny that authority; when the pope confers privileges upon them, they exalt his authority almost above Christ's (Allen Ep 477:545–52 / CWE Ep 447:600–9).
- 79 Sixtus IV (1471–84) was himself a Franciscan. So were Nicholas IV (1288–92) and Alexander V, though the latter, elected by the Council of Pisa in 1409 to replace two deposed claimants and thus end the Great Schism, is now usually regarded as an antipope.
- 80 *multicia*; Juvenal 2.66, 76
- 81 472:38–9 above. A more famous occupant of a stove room (literally a stove, *poêle*) was René Descartes, who spent his days there in the winter of 1619–20, thinking out his philosophy. See *Discours de la méthode* (1637) part 2.
- 82 Other allusions to them or to 'new islands,' the Americas and lands adjacent, are noted at 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n7. See also the appendix on Erasmus and the New World in Bataillon *Erasmus y España*. Erasmus' interest in the new lands was genuine but restrained. Their existence and what was known or believed about them by this date (1524) gave him cause for reflection on the purposes of the European invaders and their opportunities to spread Christianity as well as to conquer territories and find treasure. He had little reason to expect that the Europeans' purposes or conduct in the New World would be any more worthy than in the Old ('A Fish Diet'

686:18–28 and n69; *Ecclesiastes* LB v 814A–D). As the present passage shows, he could turn speculation on that new world and its inhabitants to literary use. Yet he seldom did so, and never in an extended fiction like *Utopia* or in the manner of Montaigne's musings on the Brazilian Indians in 'Of Cannibals' (*Essays* 1.31). If we turn from the talk about clothes in this colloquy to Montaigne's equally brief essay on the same topic, 'Of the Custom of Wearing Clothes' (1.36), which records his meditations on the nakedness of Indians in the newly discovered countries, we can make some interesting comparisons. More than half a century separates the colloquy of 1524 and the first edition of the *Essays* (1580). During those years discoveries and settlements of new lands continued to be made, with far-reaching social and political consequences. Questions raised or hinted at in *Utopia*, and by Erasmus, were still relevant in 1580. The distance from Montaigne is significant in another respect too: many or most of the earlier books on discoveries were in Latin, Montaigne's observations in French. Hereafter memorable literary description or celebration of the brave new world would be in the vernaculars.

- 83 That nakedness was the normal mode for Caribs and other Indians may have been surprising news but was reported by Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, and their successors and soon lost its novelty. Columbus says in his first letter (14 March 1493) that both sexes, except for some women, go naked. For a translation see Samuel Eliot Morison *Christopher Columbus, Mariner* (New York 1956) 149–55. In *Quatuor navigationes*, purportedly by Vespucci, a book known to More and useful for *Utopia*, the nakedness of South American Indians met on Vespucci's first voyage (1497, 1499) is emphasized (text and translation printed with the *Cosmographiae introductio* of Martin Waldseemüller ed C.G. Herbermann [New York 1907] 90, 92, 115). On this work see also F. Laubenberger 'The Naming of America' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 13 no 4 (1982) 91–113. The number and dates of Vespucci's voyages are disputed. The best collection of evidence for the nakedness of South American Indians, male and female, according to the testimony of early and later travellers and of modern anthropologists is Julian H. Steward ed *Handbook of South American Indians* Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, 7 vols (Washington, DC 1946–59).
- 84 An easy European inference. An observer who accompanied Columbus on his second voyage, after noting, as Erasmus does here, that the natives ate 'a kind of root,' adds that 'their bestiality is greater than that of any beast in the world' (*Select Documents Illustrating the Four Voyages of Columbus* ed and trans Cecil Jane, Hakluyt Society 2nd series 65 [London 1930] i, 71; I owe the reference to J.H. Elliott *The Old World and the New 1492–1650* [Cambridge 1970] 42). Reports of their 'bestiality' and, by contrast, of their intelligence and social controls are common in early accounts of the Indians. The voyagers quoted by Erasmus' innkeeper were not alone in holding a far more favourable opinion of the natives than many had. See *First Images of America: The Impact of the New World on the Old* ed Fredi Chiapelli, 2 vols (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1976) and Charles Colbert 'They Are Our Brothers': Raphael and the American Indian' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 16 no 2 (1985) 181–90.
- 85 Six hours was the standard in *Utopia* (Yale CWM 4 126:25–30), half as many as the normal requirement for European labourers.

- 86 Cassava, manioc, or mandioc, a South American shrub that is also the source of tapioca. 'Their most common food is a certain root which they grind into fairly good flour' (Vespucchi, in *Quatuor navigationes* [n83 above] 101). But, he adds, they are cannibals and eat all the enemies they capture or kill (137–8). On this custom, which fascinated Montaigne, see 'Of Cannibals' (*Essays* 1.31; Frame 155–8).
- 87 A famous passage in *Utopia* (Yale cwm 4 186:33–188:15) tells of the prudent custom there of showing a woman naked to the man she is to marry and showing the man naked to her. No specific source of this procedure, typical of Utopian rationality, has been found. It is probably More's invention, aided perhaps by such ancient analogues as Plato *Republic* 5.452 and Plutarch *Lycurgus* 14.4–15.1. Early accounts of Indians do not relate, so far as I know, that those guilty of adultery must keep their genitals covered. Nor does *Utopia*. This addition is supplied by Erasmus but nevertheless may have been suggested by his reading of *Utopia*, a book he knew well and enjoyed. His ideas about decency and modesty in a civilized and Christian society were strictly conventional. When alluding to the perversities and absurdities of mankind, he once wrote (1519) that 'if anyone arose now and taught that religion required men and women to dance together naked in the market-place, he would not lack followers and patrons for his way of thinking' (Allen Ep 1039:76–8 / CWE Ep 1039:79–82).
- 88 The worst authority on good behaviour; for references to custom in the *Colloquies* see 'The Profane Feast' n58. With the description of soldiers' dress in this paragraph, which scarcely exaggerates that of contemporary Swiss mercenaries and German Landsknechte, compare 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 329:7–330:4 and 'Cyclops' 865:12–18.
- 89 See n66 above.
- 90 Yet some foolish parents are glad to marry off a daughter to such a wretch, as Erasmus remarks elsewhere ('A Fish Diet' 718:30–7).
- 91 Cicero *De officiis* 1. 126–7. See n56 above.
- 92 We hear of these again in 'The Council of Women' 909:37–8. They cause a smile when worn by women. They are not approved for men; 'whether becoming in cardinals and bishops I leave for others to judge' (*De civilitate* LB I 1037A / CWE 25 279).
- 93 See 'Inns' n13. Rules for keeping cardinals' living and appurtenances within the bounds of modesty and simplicity were ordained by the Fifth Lateran Council in 1514 ([Bull on the reform of the curia], On cardinals; Tanner 1 617–21). See Strauss *Manifestations of Discontent* 50–2. Cardinals' traditional red hats were abolished by a papal ruling in 1969.
- 94 This question drew an objection from the Sorbonne, but Erasmus defended it and Conrad's answer as entirely sensible (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 948A–B).
- 95 This question is answered at length in 'The Godly Feast' 189:35–191:37.
- 96 To teach his followers patience and the inevitability of gradualism, the Roman general Sertorius ordered a strong man to pull out a horse's tail. He could not do so, but a slighter man stripped a more powerful horse of its tail by plucking the hairs one by one (*Adagia* I viii 95). There is reference to this story, and a drawing of it by Holbein, in *Moriae encomium* LB IV 425A–426A.

- 97 Erasmus had experienced the unpleasant consequences of changing ecclesiastical garb. As an Augustinian canon regular he wore at first the usual dress of that order, apparently a black gown or cassock, black cloak or mantle, and scapular. 'Apparently,' because it is hard to be certain about particulars of a canon's dress at a given time or place. In 1532 he challenged critics to say how many varieties of dress existed among canons regular (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 948c; cf Allen Ep 447:500-2 / CWE Ep 447:549-52). While he was living in Louvain in 1502-4 Erasmus substituted, with episcopal approval, a linen scapular for a complete linen robe and a black cassock for a black cloak, 'after the Paris fashion.' After settling in Italy in the autumn of 1506 he adopted the dress of Italian canons, black habit with scapular. With the outbreak of plague in Bologna he made a further change since, he says, his white scapular was on two occasions mistaken for the white scarf worn by physicians in time of pestilence and he feared for his safety. So he concealed his scapular and then sought, and presumably received, permission to wear the habit of a secular priest. When he resumed the habit of a regular canon in England a few years later, he discovered to his surprise that public opinion objected to it. He then gave it up, and for the rest of his life he wore a simple priest's costume. Strictly speaking, this action was a breach of canon law, making the offender liable to punishment; on the other hand, to change back again might provoke new scandal. Erasmus' account of the changes he made in his dress can be found in Allen Epp 296:171-204, 447:470-544 / CWE Epp 296:181-218, 447:514-599; see also Beatus Rhenanus in Allen I 59:112-60:146. His clerical attire was one of several dilemmas that caused Erasmus anxiety for some years; another was his living in the world instead of returning to the priory of Steyn, a circumstance that could bring accusations of apostasy; a third, his technical inability to hold benefices because of his religious vows. Finally all such troublesome irregularities were resolved by dispensations from Leo x. Essential texts for these matters are Allen III xxix / CWE Ep 187A, Epp 446, 447, 517, 518. The introductions to these letters in CWE contain important new information. See also the introduction to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 284.
- 98 For an instructive study of convention in classical and Renaissance literature, moral philosophy, and discussions of the tension between custom and nature, see Lawrence Manley *Convention 1500-1750* (Cambridge, Mass 1980).
- 99 Erasmus describes (1532) a curious dream in which he noticed important differences between the saint's dress and that of his later followers (Allen Ep 2700:37-53; and see 'The Seraphic Funeral' n17).
- 100 A statement displeasing to the Paris critics (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 948B-C)
- 101 See n105 below.
- 102 In 1527 he writes plainly to a Franciscan about this superstition, as he terms it (Allen Ep 1891:234-42). It is the *raison d'être* of 'The Seraphic Funeral.'
- 103 The pointed hoods worn by many monks and friars. In Erasmus' dream (n99 above) Francis wore no such hood.
- 104 What is related here is true enough about Francis, but Dominic's first followers are said to have worn a black cassock and rochet, as regular canons did; Dominic himself was first a canon. Later the dress was changed to a white habit and scapular with black mantle.

- 105 See 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 290:25–292:32 and nn27 and 57. Admittedly distinctions of dress, whether among clerics or laymen, are conventions. They are accepted, preserved, and socially protected by received notions of decorum. They are neither good nor bad in themselves. They prove nothing about the spiritual condition of the person who wears them. Hence Conrad's assurance to the innkeeper that there is indeed hope for him. For what is professed in baptism is what truly identifies and seals the Christian. To the question 'Therefore your dress has no other sanctity?' Conrad's reply is decisive: 'None at all' (481:17–18 above). This is unvarying Erasmian doctrine. The habit does not make the monk, an aphorism repeated in Allen Ep 1436:14 / CWE Ep 1436:15. See *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 893C–895C; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1022C–1023A, 1024C–1025A.
- 106 Let no one think he cannot go to heaven because he is not a monk. 'Fear God and you will lack nothing necessary for salvation' (*Enarratio in psalmum XXXIII* LB V 400A).
- 107 Matt 18:20, 28:19–20
- 108 St Dominic once argued all night with an innkeeper who held heretical opinions (Catharist and Albigensian). The innkeeper was finally convinced and abjured heresy. M.H. Vicaire *Histoire de saint Dominique* 2 vols (Paris 1957) I 121–5, citing Jordan of Saxony's *Libellus de principiis ordinis praedicatorum*; in the translation of Vicaire by Kathleen Pond, *Saint Dominic and His Times* (New York, Toronto, London 1964) 50–3.
- 109 Not likely, since the parish priest's permission would be needed. On this subject see n48 above and 'The Funeral' n31.
- 110 Reuchlin's *De verbo mirifico* (first edition Tübingen 1494) ends similarly, with a whispered secret. So does another colloquy, 'The Epithalamium.'

THE ABBOT AND THE LEARNED LADY

Abbatis et eruditae

First printed in the March 1524 edition as *Antronijs, Magdalia*; later called *Abbatis et eruditae*.

This short dialogue is a fitting sequel to the longer one preceding it. Both convey trenchant and characteristic Erasmian criticism of clerics, but from different angles. In 'The Well-to-do Beggars' two virtuous Franciscans, through their conduct and discourse, enlighten a sceptical innkeeper about some truths of their religious life. By contrast, the failure of lazy and ignorant clergy to perform their duties is made clear by what we learn of the village priest. In 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' we meet Antronijs, an abbot who, though socially agreeable and always available for recreation or dissipation, discloses no real vocation, shows no signs of spirituality, and is bored by serious books or studies. Often Erasmus had hard things to say of abbots, as of other prelates; some of his appraisals will be found in the notes to this colloquy. True, he did know some good abbots. One was Paul Volz, the Benedictine abbot of Hügshofen, near Sélestat, to whom Erasmus addressed an important prefatory letter to a new edition of *Enchiridion* in 1518 (Ep 858) – important because it is one of the best statements of what he calls the 'philosophy of Christ.' Another who must have met with his approval was head of the Benedictine house in Gembloux. When Erasmus wrote to him about borrowing two manuscripts for his forthcoming edition of Cyprian, the abbot was pleased by the opportunity to assist and replied that 'if you so wish our whole library shall come over to you en bloc; we will entrust the whole of it to your sense of honour' (Allen Ep 984:10–11 / CWE Ep 984:13–14). But many of the abbots met in Erasmus' pages are more like Antronijs.

We can be confident that Magdalia is drawn with Margaret Roper, the eldest and favourite daughter of Thomas More, in mind. There was no other learned woman Erasmus knew so well or esteemed so highly. He had been acquainted with her for many years. She and her sisters are mentioned in this colloquy, and she had married a man, William Roper, More's future biographer, who admired her learning. Furthermore this dialogue appeared only a few years after Erasmus had written eloquently on More's principles of educating his daughters and the success of those principles (Allen Ep 1233:103–49 / CWE Ep 1233:112–62; see n33 below). That same letter has a good brief comment by Erasmus on his own commitment to literary education for women; for another see *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (1526)

LB v 716C–717B. He acknowledges that he himself had formerly shared the common prejudice that learning was perilous or useless for women, but the accomplishments of More's daughters have changed his mind. Some passages in Ep 1233 anticipate remarks of Magdalia in this colloquy.

These and other affirmations, some of them cited in the notes below, place Erasmus among the more humane thinkers on this subject. Yet we should recognize the limits of his liberalism, if that is the word for it, because on some other questions of education that may occur to his readers his views were conventional. All his writings on schooling presuppose that curricula and pedagogy for grammar schools are planned for males – naturally, since with very few exceptions these would be the future leaders of church and state and fill the ranks of the professions. Girls seldom attended grammar schools, but were educated at home, if at all. He did not think of universal compulsory public education even for boys; he himself preferred private tutoring as the best kind of instruction. The kind of curriculum he was concerned with was for those thought to be capable of absorbing and profiting by it. It was not for everyone. He hoped simple housewives and other ordinary people would read the Psalms and Gospels in their own tongues, but he did not dream of their learning classical languages – when would they have time for that? The women he praises for erudition are those with leisure to learn. Another important point to remember is that despite all his refreshing common sense and humaneness (for instance his denunciation of flogging in school) in his writings on education and on courtship, marriage, and the rearing of children he never strayed far from fundamental Pauline precepts about women.

Vives' *De institutione feminae christianae* was issued in 1524. Erasmus and Vives respected each other, corresponded, and probably read each other's books. They agreed in the main on education for women: that women are just as capable of education in letters as men are, that learning is not morally dangerous, and that it does not hinder but helps domestic concord. Vives' book, like Erasmus' *Institutio christiani matrimonii* of 1526, was inscribed to Queen Catherine of England. In the present dialogue Erasmus does not have royalty or aristocracy in mind so much as the middle classes; the abbot contrasts Magdalia with 'court ladies.' Expansion of literacy, printing, and the book trade coincided roughly, both on the Continent and in England. These were only a few manifestations, though decidedly significant ones, of that 'laicization of culture' which was a distinctive feature of Renaissance, as compared with medieval, society in western Europe.

This colloquy was translated into Spanish by Alonso Ruiz de Virués in 1529 (Bataillon *Erasme et l'Espagne* xxix no 265). A French translation by Marot, in which the lady is named Ysabeau, appeared c 1548; text ed C.A. Mayer in *Traductions* (Geneva 1980) 247–67.

ANTRONIUS,¹ MAGDALIA

Antronius What furnishings do I see here?

Magdalia Elegant, aren't they?

5 **Antronius** How elegant I don't know, but certainly unbecoming both to a young miss and a married woman.

Magdalia Why?

Antronius Because the whole place is full of books.

Magdalia Are you so old, an abbot as well as a courtier,² and have never
10 seen books in court ladies'³ houses?

Antronius Yes, but those were in French. Here I see Greek and Latin ones.⁴

Magdalia Are French books the only ones that teach wisdom?⁵

Antronius But it's fitting for court ladies to have something with which to beguile their leisure.

15 **Magdalia** Are court ladies the only ones allowed to improve their minds and enjoy themselves?

Antronius You confuse growing wise with enjoying yourself. It's not feminine to be brainy. A lady's business is to have a good time.

Magdalia Shouldn't everyone live well?

20 **Antronius** Yes, in my opinion.

Magdalia But who can have a good time without living well?

Antronius Rather, who can enjoy himself if he *does* live well?

Magdalia So you approve of those who live basely if only they have a good time?

25 **Antronius** I believe those who have a good time are living well.

Magdalia Where does this good time come from? From externals or from within?

Antronius From externals.⁶

Magdalia Shrewd abbot but stupid philosopher! Tell me: how do you
30 measure good times?

Antronius By sleep, dinner parties, doing as one likes, money, honours.

Magdalia But if to these things God added wisdom, you wouldn't enjoy yourself?

Antronius What do you mean by wisdom?

35 **Magdalia** This: understanding that a man is not happy without the goods of the mind; that wealth, honours, noble birth make him neither happier nor better.

Antronius Away with that wisdom!

Magdalia What if I enjoy reading a good author more than you do hunting,
40 drinking, or playing dice?⁷ You won't think I'm having a good time?

Antronius I wouldn't live like that.

Magdalia I'm not asking what *you* would enjoy most, but what *ought* to be enjoyable.

Antronus I wouldn't want my monks to spend their time on books.

Magdalia Yet my husband heartily approves of my doing so.⁸ But exactly
5 why do you disapprove of this in your monks?

Antronus Because I find they're less tractable; they talk back by quoting from decrees and decretals, from Peter and Paul.⁹

Magdalia So your rules conflict with those of Peter and Paul?

Antronus What *they* may enjoin I don't know, but still I don't like a monk
10 who talks back.¹⁰ And I don't want any of mine to know more than I do.

Magdalia You could avoid that by endeavouring to know as much as possible.

Antronus I haven't the leisure.

Magdalia How come?

15 **Antronus** Because I've no free time.

Magdalia No free time to grow wise?

Antronus No.

Magdalia What hinders you?

Antronus Long prayers, housekeeping, hunts, horses, court functions.

20 **Magdalia** So these are more important to you than wisdom?

Antronus It's what we're used to.

Magdalia Now tell me this: if some heavenly power¹¹ enabled you to turn your monks and yourself too into any animal whatever, would you change them into hogs and yourself into a horse?

25 **Antronus** Not at all.

Magdalia But by doing so you'd prevent anybody's being wiser than you.

Antronus I shouldn't much care what sort of animal the monks were, provided I myself were a human being.

Magdalia Do you think one is human if he's neither wise nor wants to be
30 wise?¹²

Antronus I'm wise enough – so far as I'm concerned.

Magdalia And swine are wise enough so far as *they're* concerned.

Antronus You strike me as a sophistress,¹³ so keenly do you dispute.

Magdalia I won't say how you strike me. But why do these furnishings
35 displease you?

Antronus Because distaff and spindle are the proper equipment for women.¹⁴

Magdalia Isn't it a wife's business to manage the household and rear the children?

40 **Antronus** It is.

Magdalia Do you think she can manage so big a job without wisdom?

Antroni I suppose not.

Magdalia But books teach me this wisdom.

Antroni Sixty-two monks I have in the monastery, yet you won't find a single book in my cell.

5 **Magdalia** Those monks are well provided for!

Antroni I could put up with books, but not Latin ones.¹⁵

Magdalia Why not?

Antroni Because that language isn't fit for women.

Magdalia I want to know why.

10 **Antroni** Because it does little to protect their chastity.¹⁶

Magdalia Therefore French books, full of the most frivolous stories, do promote chastity?

Antroni There's another reason.

Magdalia Tell me plainly, whatever it is.

15 **Antroni** They're safer from priests if they don't know Latin.¹⁷

Magdalia Very little danger from you in that respect, since you take such pains not to know Latin!

Antroni The public agrees with me, because it's a rare and exceptional thing for a woman to know Latin.

20 **Magdalia** Why cite the public, the worst possible authority on conduct? Why tell me of custom, the mistress of every vice?¹⁸ Accustom yourself to the best; then the unusual will become habitual, the unpleasant enjoyable, the apparently unseemly, seemly.

Antroni I hear you.

25 **Magdalia** Is it fitting for a German woman to learn French?

Antroni Of course.

Magdalia Why?

Antroni To talk with those who know French.

30 **Magdalia** And you think it unsuitable for me to know Latin in order to converse daily with authors so numerous, so eloquent, so learned, so wise, with counsellors so faithful?

Antroni Books ruin women's wits – which are none too plentiful anyway.

Magdalia How plentiful yours are, I don't know. Assuredly I prefer to spend mine, however slight, on profitable studies rather than on prayers said
35 by rote, all-night parties, and heavy drinking.

Antroni Bookishness drives people mad.¹⁹

Magdalia The company of boozers, fools, and jesters doesn't drive you mad?²⁰

Antroni Not at all. It relieves boredom.

40 **Magdalia** Then how could such delightful companions as mine drive me mad?

Antronus That's what people say.

Magdalia But the plain fact of the matter says something else. How many more we see driven mad through intemperate wining and dining, night-long bouts of drunkenness, uncontrolled passions!

5 **Antronus** I'm sure I wouldn't want a learned wife.

Magdalia But I congratulate myself on having a husband different from you.²¹ For learning endears him more to me and me to him.

Antronus Learning costs immense toil, and after all you must die.

Magdalia Tell me, my dear sir: if you had to die tomorrow, would you rather
10 die more foolish or more wise?²²

Antronus If wisdom came without hard work –

Magdalia But man gets nothing in this life without hard work. And yet whatever he does win, with however much labour, must be left behind. Why
15 should we hesitate to take pains in the most precious thing of all, the fruits of which accompany us to another life also?

Antronus I've often heard the common saying, 'A wise woman is twice foolish.'²³

Magdalia That's commonly said, yes, but by fools. A woman truly wise is not wise in her own conceit. On the other hand, one who thinks herself wise
20 when she knows nothing is indeed twice foolish.

Antronus I don't know how it is, but as pack-saddles don't fit an ox,²⁴ so learning doesn't fit a woman.

Magdalia But you can't deny that pack-saddles would fit an ox better than a mitre²⁵ would fit an ass or a swine. – What's your feeling about the Virgin
25 Mother?

Antronus I reverence her.

Magdalia Didn't she read books?

Antronus Yes, but not these.

Magdalia What did she read, then?

30 **Antronus** The canonical Hours.

Magdalia According to which use?²⁶

Antronus The Benedictine.²⁷

Magdalia Very likely! What about Paula and Eustochium?²⁸ Didn't they read the Sacred Scriptures?²⁹

35 **Antronus** But that's rare nowadays.

Magdalia So was an unlettered abbot a rare bird³⁰ once upon a time! Nowadays nothing's more common. Once upon a time princes and emperors excelled as much in learning as in might.³¹ But even now this isn't so rare as you suppose. In Spain and Italy there are not a few women of the highest
40 rank who can rival any man.³² In England there are the More daughters,³³ in Germany the Pirckheimer and Blarer ladies.³⁴ If you're not careful,³⁵ the

net result will be that we'll preside in the theological schools, preach in the churches, and wear your mitres.³⁶

Antronius God forbid!

- 5 **Magdalia** No, it will be up to *you* to forbid. But if you keep on as you've begun, geese may do the preaching sooner than put up with you tongue-tied pastors.³⁷ The world's a stage that's topsy-turvy now, as you see. Everyone must play his part or – exit.³⁸

Antronius How did I run across this woman? When you come calling on us, I'll treat you more politely.

- 10 **Magdalia** How?

Antronius We'll dance, drink as much as we please, hunt, play games, laugh.

Magdalia For my part, I feel like laughing even now.

NOTES

- 1 'Antronius asinus' was proverbial for someone exceptionally gross and stupid (*Adagia* II v 68). The donkeys of Antron, a town in Thessaly, were said to be of unusual size and corresponding asininity, nature taking away from their intelligence what it added to their corpulence. Even today, Erasmus remarks, fat men are commonly considered stupid. Cf *Antibarbari* ASD I-1 51:14–20 / CWE 23 28:15–20. Antronius is also the name of a character in the colloquy 'Penny-Pinching.'

Henry Standish, a Franciscan who became bishop of St Asaph in 1518, has been suggested as the original of the abbot in this dialogue, mainly because Erasmus had once one called him 'episcopus a sancto Asino' (Allen Ep 1162:153; Smith *Key* 27; and see Knowles *ROE* III 53–5). Standish, one of Henry VIII's court preachers, was a persistent critic of Erasmus, who detested him; see the ironic description in *Adagia* II v 98 LB II 581A / CWE 33 286. A more likely original, if one is needed, may be William Lowthe, the raffish prior of Walsingham Abbey, whose incompetence and misconduct were so notorious that in 1514, a month or so after Erasmus is thought to have visited Walsingham, he was removed from office. On Erasmus and Walsingham see 'A Pilgrimage.'

- 2 Being such seems incompatible with his office as abbot of a monastery; commonly, those enlisted for advisory or administrative or diplomatic roles by princes were drawn from the ranks of the secular clergy. Wolsey is one of many obvious examples. 'An abbot does not seem respectable unless he is a count also' (*Adagia* III iii 1 LB II 781E / CWE 34 281); and 'It is nearly always the very dullest who burst into the role of abbot or some other high office' (*Antibarbari* CWE 23 32:13–15). Some abbots enjoyed privileges similar to those of bishops, and like bishops were prominent socially and politically as well as ecclesiastically. Antronius, like all abbots, has absolute rule over his monks, but he evidently spends much of his time at court and in the pursuit of pleasure.
- 3 *heroinarum* 'noblewomen.' On the foolishness of their upbringing see *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 716F–717C.

- 4 Latin was an unquestioned and unquestionable requirement for ordinary grammar-school students as well as all learned professions. It was the common language of scholars, the convenient international medium of commerce and diplomacy, and was useful and at times indispensable for traders, bankers, and travellers. 'Letters' (*literae*) meant Latin; 'grammar' meant Latin grammar. The grammar school's main but not sole business was to teach boys to read, write, and speak Latin. Most of the texts were in Latin. Vernacular languages were not totally ignored, but presented little difficulty, since they were learned at home, whereas the learned tongues demanded years of study in school.

For theology, law, and medicine the need of Latin was obvious. For clerics, particularly those in the higher ranks, lack of competence in Latin was, in the judgment of Erasmus, a downright disgrace. The humanists emphasized, none more zealously than he, the urgency of adding knowledge of Greek to their Latin, and Hebrew if possible. He was impatient with those who evaded or opposed something so clearly necessary for theological studies as the ancient languages. Like other writers, for example the authors of the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*, he enjoyed anecdotes about clerical and prelatical ignoramuses, whom he sometimes mocked by contrasting their pretentiousness with their ignorance. At times, however, the joke was less than amusing to him, as we see in the colloquies 'Philological Society' and 'The Sermon.'

The condition of Greek differed from that of Latin. Latin had been learned and used in western and northern Europe for a thousand years or more. When this colloquy was written the study of Greek was still something of a novelty in some quarters. Not only that but it was still suspect, considered by some a risky subject connected with persons of questionable orthodoxy – including Erasmus. According to him, opponents of Greek held that 'to know Greek is heresy' (see references in CWE 23 xxvi n24). Greek manuscripts and instruction in the language had been available in Italy to a few eager students before the birth of Erasmus. Translations also were available in manuscript copies; then, thanks to printing, both texts and translations began to circulate more widely. The story is an old one, often told – nowhere better, for the student of Erasmus, than in R.R. Bolgar's *The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge 1954). The recovery of Greek produced new knowledge and understanding of ancient civilization and individual authors. It produced new attitudes towards classical antiquity and the values of that classical heritage: in sum, what Erasmus and his contemporaries meant when they wrote of the 'revival' of ancient letters (as in Allen Epp 541:134, 862:1–42, 967:128 / CWE Epp 541:150, 862:4–49, 967:142–3). Improvements in philology, as Erasmus understood philology, contributed new and more precise ways of interpreting texts and thus advanced both textual and historical criticism. In Erasmus' writings there is unmistakable awareness that because of these advantages he was living in a new era, a time of great promise for learning, literature, and scholarship. We sense his enthusiasm and fervour in the prefaces to his editions, commentaries, and translations, and what he tells us of the printers he had known and aided in their services to learning: Aldo Manuzio in Venice, Josse Bade in Paris, Johann Amerbach and the Frobens in Basel, and others.

Knowledge of Greek conferred many benefits, but for Erasmus the most important was its value for studies of the Septuagint, the New Testament, and patristic texts. Since the sacred truths of Scripture are conveyed in language, the theologian, exegete, and preacher must know that language, its grammar, syntax, style, vocabulary, idioms, and nuances, for his own and his readers' or hearers' edification. There is no substitute for such knowledge when one has to ponder, interpret, or discourse on biblical events and doctrines. The Vulgate text, sanctioned by so many centuries of use, was bound to be kept in divine service, but the Latin text alone was not enough for the Christian scholar, although the Council of Vienne (1311–12) decreed that scholarly study and instruction in Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldaic should be established at Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca, and wherever the Roman curia happened to reside (decree [24]; Tanner 1 379). Country priests, like the ones met briefly in 'The Well-to-do Beggars' and in the opening pages of 'The Funeral,' might be incapable – as obviously many were – of appreciating and acting on these self-evident facts, but there was no excuse for a dignitary of the church, an abbot or a bishop, to tolerate wilful ignorance, most of all in himself. Certain theologians critical of Erasmus' emphasis on the ancient tongues (Greek above all; Latin ought to be taken for granted) mistook his views for a novelty when in fact to 'go back to the sources' is the beginning of wisdom (Allen Epp 1144:18, 1183:35–40, 1225:219–25 / CWE Epp 1144:22, 1183:38–44, 1225:237–44). One might be a theologian of sorts without languages, but not a reliable expositor of the text of Scripture without knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. For Erasmus' insistence on this point see *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* (1519), especially book 1 LB IX 79B–90E. Cf Allen Epp 1033:229–43, 1062:79–86 / CWE Epp 1033:252–67, 1062:87–96.

We can understand better Erasmus' perspectives and problems by keeping in mind that it took time for Greek studies to flourish as he desired. In his years at Cambridge (1511–14) at the invitation of John Fisher he lectured for some months on Greek and divinity, the first to do so, with what success is not recorded. (On his life and work there see D.F.S. Thomson and H.C. Porter *Erasmus and Cambridge* [Toronto 1963].) A few years later a Greek lectureship was established at Oxford by Wolsey, at Cambridge by Fisher. Innovations of this sort were not welcomed by all members of the universities. At Oxford a party of opponents called 'Trojans' made known their displeasure. Whether they were motivated solely by concern for the university's welfare or by other and more personal or political matters, as not seldom happens when something new is proposed, must be left to conjecture. Report of the affair reached the king (1518), who was annoyed and told More to warn the Trojans to stop making trouble. More did so in a letter of admonition, elegantly phrased but with hints that were understood and heeded. For the text see *Correspondence* 111–20 / *Selected Letters* 94–103. See also More's defence of Greek studies in his long letter (1515) to Dorp about Erasmus (*Correspondence* 27–74 / *Selected Letters* 6–64 / Yale CWM 15 1–27); for Erasmus' own reply to Dorp, see Ep 337. These letters dwell for the most part on *Moriae encomium* and theologians' strictures on it, but they have significant things to say about Erasmus' opinions on Greek studies also. With them should be read another long letter by More (1519–20), to an English monk who had been critical of Erasmus' Greek

New Testament (*Correspondence* 165–206 / partial translation in *Selected Letters* 114–44). That edition of the Greek New Testament, the first to be published, alarmed conservative scholars, some of them powerful in the academic circles of Paris and Louvain; another foe was an English ecclesiastic, Edward Lee, later archbishop of York, with whom Erasmus had an acrimonious quarrel (summarized by Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 225–34). His critics, outspoken men of strong convictions and of learning (except for the fatal lack of Greek), Erasmus could at least argue with. Mere dullards or obstructionists (whether sincere or not) such as Antronius in the colloquy could not be reached by argument. What he could and did do was to attack his opponents by caricature, irony, and satire in dramatic dialogue, as here and in ‘The Sermon.’ Magdalia can dispose of Antronius with wit and finesse. Weapons like these are Erasmus’ favourites and his most successful ones.

Although the Reuchlin affair (see introduction to the colloquy on his apotheosis, 244–6 above) had involved Hebrew rather than Greek, the character of the issues and of the disputants was much the same as in the controversies over Greek. When Luther became the issue, it was easy for some of Erasmus’ academic enemies to imply that partisans of philology – champions of ancient languages, would-be correctors of the text of the New Testament, questioners of tradition – were responsible for much of the mischief stirred up by Luther, and conversely that Luther was merely the most extreme of these ‘humanists’ (as they are labelled by Erasmus’ inveterate enemy Bêda; see Allen Ep 1679:39n). Erasmus denied that literature or philology begot Lutheranism or imperilled Christian orthodoxy, or that Luther had anything to do with such studies. He acknowledged that at first many enlightened persons, favourable to letters, sympathized with Luther’s utterances (Allen Ep 1634:55–6). And at times he was disposed to blame the troubles over Luther on the stupidity of monks and hatred of ‘good learning’ (Allen Epp 1141:25–6, 1202:188–9 / *CWE* Epp 1141:30–2, 1202:215–17). Assertions of these kinds are common in his letters. See introduction to my edition of his *Inquisitio de fide* 11–13.

- 5 Some may improve the mind; others do not. Antronius’ response to Magdalia’s ironic questioning implies that the French books he deems appropriate for ladies ‘to beguile their leisure’ are the *Roman de la rose*, popular Arthurian romances or, even worse, texts or translations of Boccaccio or Poggio Bracciolini. Vives denounces such works as frivolous and morally injurious; see *De institutione feminae christianae* (1524) 1.5 *Opera omnia* IV 86–7 / English translation by Richard Hyrde, printed 1540 (STC 24857) E4 recto-verso; reprint in Foster Watson *Vives and the Renaissance Education of Women* (New York and London 1912) 58–9. A comparable passage occurs in Vives *De officio mariti* (1529) in *Opera omnia* IV 363–4 / in Thomas Paynell’s English translation (c 1533) 07–8; Watson 196. Like other humanists Erasmus condemns romances, for example those of Arthur and Lancelot (*Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 587C–D / ASD IV-1 179:427–180:430 / *CWE* 27 250 / Born 200). He would have endorsed Ascham’s denunciation in the preface to *Toxophilus* (1545) of ‘bookes of fayned chevalrie, wherin a man by redinge, shuld be led to none other ende, but onely to manslaughter and baudrye’ *English Works* ed W.A. Wright (Cambridge 1904; repr 1970) xiv. All the more unsuitable were they for young women. For *amatoriae fabellae* must be rejected. Equally harmful are *novae cantiones* which

appear every year and are learned by girls; such things are popular with Flemings (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 717F–718A).

6 On the kinds and ends of goods see the colloquy 'The Epicurean.'

7 On clerical drinking and dicing, vices usually associated with tavern-haunting, see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n46. The Third Lateran Council of 1179 forbade prelates to take hunting dogs and birds with them on visitations (canon 4; Tanner I 213). Hunting and fowling were expressly forbidden to clerics by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 (constitution 15; Tanner I 243) and the Council of Vienne of 1311–12 (decree [14]; Tanner I 371). The Council of Trent found it necessary to decree that clergy holding canonries or prebends in cathedrals or collegiate churches abstain from 'unlawful hunting, fowling, dances, taverns, and games' (session 24 [1563] Decree on reform, canon 12; Tanner II 767). For a survey of medieval regulations on the subject see Rudolph Willard 'Chaucer's "Text That Seith That Hunters Ben Nat Hooly Men"' *Studies in English* (University of Texas 1947) 209–51. Disapproval of hunting by clerics dates from patristic times. Proof-texts were the stories of Nimrod and Esau in Gen 10:8–11, 27:1–41.

Forbidden or not, hunting continued to be a persistent and irrepressible clerical recreation, but was more of a nuisance than anything else, 'not one of the most formidable causes of laxity' (Knowles ROE II 247). Visitation records note that too many hounds are kept and sometimes run loose in the monastery itself; dogs eat up the food that ought to go to the poor; some monks are incessant hunters. For typical examples of complaints see G.R. Owst *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (Cambridge 1933) 260, 264, 269, 270, 278, 279; A. Hamilton Thompson *The English Clergy and Their Organization in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford 1947) 169–70, 293; *Visitations of the Diocese of Norwich* ed A. Jessopp, Camden Society new series 43 (London 1888) 21, 46 and passim; *Visitations in the Diocese of Lincoln 1517–31* ed A. Hamilton Thompson, Lincoln Record Society (1940–7) volumes 33, 35, 37. Other visitation records yield similar evidence.

Pope Pius II (1460) rebuked cardinals for hunting (*Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: The Commentaries of Pius II* trans Florence A. Gragg, ed Leona C. Gabel [New York 1959; repr 1962] 149–50). On hunting by popes and cardinals see also E. Rodocanachi *Histoire de Rome: le pontificat de Jules II (1503–1513)* (Paris 1928) 85 and *Le pontificat de Léon X (1513–1521)* (Paris 1931) 175–9; Rodolfo Lanciani *The Golden Days of the Renaissance in Rome* (London 1906) 308–19. Cardinal Adriano Castellesi, at one time papal agent in England and later non-resident bishop of two English sees, wrote a poem on hunting, *Venatio* (1505; I have used a Strasbourg 1512 edition). In *De copia* cwe 24 581:1–2 Erasmus says without explanation that Adriano's authorship is denied by some. The poem is dedicated to a brother cardinal, Ascanio Sforza. The first half describes a morning's hunt in the Roman Campagna, the second a lavish open-air breakfast served afterwards. It was an outing Abbot Antronius would have enjoyed. On Castellesi see CEBR.

Erasmus and More disapproved of hunting as sport; see the introduction to 'Hunting' 109. Contemporaries who shared this opinion include Luther, who, writing from the Wartburg 15 August 1521, relates that he went on a hunt but found that the superficial pleasure he might have derived from it

- was necessarily accompanied by an equivalent pity and pain aroused at the spectacle of the hounds tearing the hares to pieces (wa *Briefwechsel* 2 Ep 427). Other objectors were Colet in his convocation sermon (Lupton *Life of Colet* 295–6, 300–1) and Cornelius Agrippa *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum* (1530) chapter 77. Montaigne found hunting exciting but, like Luther, could not bear to hear the piteous squealing of a hare in the hound's jaws (*Essays* 'Of Cruelty' 2.11; Frame 313). Archbishop Warham is praised by Erasmus because he had no time for hunting or dice (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 811B). His successor at Canterbury, Cranmer, liked a bit of hunting or hawking after the day's work; so his secretary tells us (*Narratives of the Days of the Reformation* ed J.G. Nichols, Camden Society 1st series 77 [London 1859; repr New York 1968] 239).
- 8 Magdalia's husband no doubt agrees with Erasmus' opinion, concerning married women, that 'nothing is more intractable than ignorance' (Allen Ep 1233:117–20 / CWE Ep 1233:127–31, in the passage about the education of Thomas More's daughters).
 - 9 Taken by the ASD editors to refer to two medieval commentators on canon law, Baldo degli Ubaldi (fourteenth century) and Paul de Castro (fifteenth century). Erasmus mentions Baldo in Allen Epp 134:26, 1469:102, 246 / CWE Epp 134:31, 1469:108, 265. Early annotators of the *Colloquia* ignore this passage, assuming apparently that the apostles Peter and Paul are meant. Perhaps the intended satire does indeed lie in Antronius' coupling of canonists and apostles together and dismissing the lot of them as writers he has neither time nor inclination to trouble himself with.
 - 10 Antronius is clearly one of 'the ordinary run of abbots' described in *Antibarbari* who object to learning in their monks because 'the educated are less tractable than the ignorant' (CWE 23 25:29–35, 80:14–17; cf 32:13–14). A similar opinion is voiced by an abbot of Heidelberg in an anecdote in *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* 521 and by an abbot in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* 1.39 who thinks 'it is a monstrous thing to see a learned monk.' William Lowthe, the notorious prior of Walsingham Abbey (see n1 above), suspected studious monks of wishing to subvert religion (*Norwich Visitations* [n7 above] 120).
 - 11 *quis Jupiter*. The wife in 'Marriage' is asked a similar question about her husband (318:17–18).
 - 12 The implications of 'human' in the abbot's assertion and Magdalia's question are noteworthy. Erasmus very often emphasizes that desire and pursuit of knowledge through *bonae literae* and *honestae disciplinae* lead to wisdom and distinguish civilized men from savages, human beings from beasts. This conviction accounts for his fondness for comparing his critics, and other enemies of enlightenment, to donkeys, serpents, vultures, swine, and so on, as he frequently does in the *Colloquia*.
 - 13 *Sophistria*; see 'Courtship' 260:5 and n15.
 - 14 Pierre Cousturier (Petrus Sutor), a Carthusian critic of Erasmus, argued that a housewife who spent her time reading Scripture would neglect her household duties. Not at all, replied Erasmus; by reading Scripture she would learn what they are (*Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 785D–E). Cousturier is one of the opponents satirized in 'The Philological Society.'
 - 15 See n4 above.

- 16 Idleness and improper amusements are the chief dangers to chastity, but the accomplishments of More's highly literate daughters convinced Erasmus once and for all that there is no better safeguard against temptation than love of study and the reading of good literature that instils sound moral principles (Allen Ep 1233:103–19 / CWE Ep 1233:112–30). Admittedly some pages in ancient poets are unfit for young readers. This was a difficulty for Colet when he prepared a program for St Paul's School in London, and one that Erasmus discusses in *Antibarbari*; see CWE 23 xxix–xxxii. Humanist educators agreed that in school and at home a course of reading must be selective and controlled.
- 17 The notion that knowledge of Latin would expose women to danger from priests is dismissed by Richard Hyrde in his prefatory letter to Margaret Roper's translation of Erasmus' *Precatio dominica* (see n33 below). Greek and Latin books are no more harmful than French or English ones. Besides, priest and friars, Hyrde says, usually don't know Latin well enough to 'make their bargain in Latin and Greek so readily' with women. A studious woman may be encouraged to read the Christian Latin poets – as Colet wanted the St Paul's boys to do – or moral philosophers and patristic writers.
- 18 As Erasmus often remarks. For other references to custom in the Colloquies see 'The Profane Feast' n58.
- 19 Perhaps an allusion to Acts 26:24
- 20 *combibonum, scurrarum, et sannionum*. See 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n29.
- 21 In his 1521 account of the More family, written for Budé, he says husbands have no reason to fear that highly educated wives are less compliant than others (see n8 above). Some people absurdly believe that girls kept at home are sufficiently educated if separated from men until marriage, no matter how foolish the women with whom they spend their time. On the contrary a girl well trained in letters is more likely to protect her chastity and will make a better wife (Allen Ep 1233:103–17 / CWE Ep 1233:112–27; *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 716C–D). There is no reason why a young wife should not learn Latin and Greek. If circumstances do not permit this, she should at least read vernacular books – good ones, that is. What she must not do is to waste her time on nonsense. Let her husband supervise her reading and train her in her duties (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 690F–691F). For an illustration of how More improved his young wife's mind see the colloquy 'Marriage' 314:24–315:36. That wife became the mother of Margaret.
- 22 Perhaps a recollection of More's reply when Erasmus asked him whether, after taking such pains to educate his daughters, his sorrow would not be the greater if they died young: 'If anything inevitable were to happen, I would rather they died educated than uneducated' (Allen Ep 1233:145–6 / CWE Ep 1233:158–9).
- 23 Not found in *Adagia* or in Hans Walther *Proverbia sententiaeque Latinitatis medii aevi* / *Lateinische Sprichwörter und Sentenzen des Mittelalters* = *Carmina medii aevi posterioris Latina* part 2, 5 vols plus index (Göttingen 1963–9), but it is in Tilley (w643), which has also 'Take heed of a young wench, a prophetess, and a Latin woman' (H375). W.L. Wiley's otherwise excellent book *The Gentleman of Renaissance France* (Cambridge, Mass 1954) 188 quotes Erasmus as saying 'A woman is always a woman, that is, something stupid.' But it is Folly who says

this, not Erasmus in *propria persona* (*Moriae encomium* LB IV 418C-D / ASD IV-3 90:340-2 / CWE 27 95), and that makes all the difference.

24 *Adagia* II ix 84

25 Bishop's and abbot's liturgical head-dress

26 On misuse of them, see *Apologiae contra Stunicam* LB IX 368E-369A.

27 Probably, but not certainly, the order to which Antronius belongs

28 St Paula (347-404) and her daughter St Eustochium (370-c 419), of a Roman patrician family, became devout Christians and friends of Jerome, whom they followed to Palestine in 385, settling in Bethlehem. There they served as his secretaries, lived lives of austerity, and studied Scripture, including Hebrew; Greek they had doubtless known earlier. Paula established a monastery and three convents (Jerome Ep 108.20). The convents she ruled until her death, when Eustochium succeeded her. Another Roman lady of aristocratic and wealthy family, St Marcella, whom Erasmus names with Paula and Eustochium in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1103:12-14, kept in close touch with Jerome but remained in Rome, where she spent her life in good works; she died in 410 from the effects of the sack of Rome by the army of Alaric. Jerome wrote constantly to these women. Some of the letters are classics of Christian literature. Their vivid accounts of contemporary political, social, and religious events and their disclosure of Jerome's judgments on religious and many other topics make them invaluable to historians. Among the letters is a memoir of Marcella (Ep 127), a long eulogy of Paula (Ep 108), and a famous tractate on virginity addressed to Eustochium (Ep 22). In 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' Erasmus implies that in Magdalia he presents a modern counterpart of Paula and Eustochium. Eustochium was unmarried; Magdalia is a wife. Jerome exalted virginity (Epp 22, 107, 130); Erasmus, with equal fervour, praised Christian marriage; see 'Courtship' introduction and nn53, 59, 65; the introduction to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 279-81.

29 In Latin and Greek and, for the Psalter, Hebrew

30 *Adagia* II i 21

31 *Adagia* I iii 1 has a long catalogue of the follies of unenlightened rulers, but Erasmus' concern there is the moral rather than intellectual virtues; similarly *Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 562A-564F / ASD IV-1 138:47-142:203 / Born 140-7 / CWE 27 207-12.

32 Older but useful studies of this subject include W.H. Woodward *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators* (Cambridge 1897; repr New York 1963), *Studies in Education in the Age of the Renaissance* (Cambridge 1906; repr New York 1967), and *Desiderius Erasmus Concerning the Aim and Method of Education* (Cambridge 1904; repr New York 1964); Allen *Age of Erasmus*. As an aspect of the history of women and of feminism the topic has attracted considerable attention in recent years in books and scattered papers. For some of these consult bibliographical references in J.K. Sowards 'Erasmus and the Education of Women' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 13 no 4 (1982) 77-89. R.H. Bainton *Women of the Reformation in Germany and Italy* (Minneapolis 1971; repr Boston 1974) and companion volumes on women in France and England (Minneapolis 1973; repr Boston 1975) and from Spain to Scandinavia (Minneapolis 1977) should be added; likewise Ruth Kelso *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana 1956) and Pearl Hogrefe *Tudor Women* (Ames, Iowa 1975).

Erasmus praises Elizabeth (Isabella) of Aragon, mother of Catherine, who became queen of England, for both learning and piety (*De pueris instituendis*; see Margolin's edition [Geneva 1966] 421 n494). A friend tells Erasmus of a Spanish noblewoman, Mencía de Mendoza, countess of Nassau, an excellent Latinist and an admirer of Erasmus (Allen Ep 3111:99–105). She was a patroness of Vives in his later years; see J.K. Steppe 'Mencía de Mendoza et ses relations avec Erasme, Gilles de Busleyden et J.L. Vives' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 451–67. We even hear of a woman filling a chair of rhetoric in the University of Alcalá in that same generation (Allen *Lectures* 145). A learned lady in Portugal, Louise Sigée (Sigea), knew Hebrew and Arabic besides Greek and Latin and wrote a *Duarum virginum colloquium de vita aulica et privata* (1552); see Elizabeth Feist Hirsch's review of Louise Sigée *Dialogue de deux jeunes filles sur la vie de cour et la vie de retraite* (1552) ed Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian (Paris 1970) BHR 33 (1971) 724–6. Examples of highly literate women in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and of advocacy of their right to study, are not limited to the countries named by Magdalia. France is conspicuous by its absence in her remarks, though the generation after Erasmus offers some notable names for the list, and it is difficult to believe he could not have supplied others from his own generation too. Jean Bouchet, in the preface to his *Le jugement poétique de l'honneur féminin* [sic] (Poitiers 1538), defended women's right to study; see J. Britnell 'Jean Bouchet's Prayers in French for the Laity . . .' BHR 38 (1976) 422n. Later Montaigne, more sceptical, would limit their book-learning to poetry, an art suitable to their love of display, and to whatever in moral philosophy would teach them to cope with the pleasures and disappointments of life (*Essays* 3.3 'Of Three Kinds of Association'; Frame 624–5). Marguerite of Navarre's reply to this condescension towards her sex would be worth having. As humanist, writer, and patroness of literature, hers is a major name in sixteenth-century letters. See Sem Dresden *Humanism in the Renaissance* trans Margaret King (New York and Toronto 1968) 149–56; for her place in the Reformation Bainton *Women of the Reformation in France and England* 13–41. A complete biographical register of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century women who were scholars and writers, with a record of what they wrote, would be an important contribution to the cultural history of the Renaissance. Data for such a register are multiplying in monographs and editions. *Her Immaculate Hand*, ed and trans Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Jr (Binghamton, NY 1983), is an interesting collection of amply annotated letters and orations by Italian women humanists, mostly of the fifteenth century. Perhaps the most extraordinary, Cassandra Fedele, delivered an oration at the age of ninety-one on the occasion of a visit to Venice by the queen of Poland. She also wrote poetry and epistles and was conversant with Aristotelian philosophy. On Laura Cereta (1469–99) see the study by Albert Rabil Jr (Binghamton, NY 1981), which includes some of her Latin compositions. Leonardo Bruni (Aretino) dedicated his *De studiis et litteris* (written between 1423 and 1426) to the daughter of a count of Urbino. This is a brief but cogent exposition of the reading and teaching of literary texts by classical authors. See Bolgar (n4 above) 269, 431; a translation of the tractate is included in Woodward *Vittorino da Feltre* (n32 above) 119–33. The scholarly woman to whom the work was presented, Battista, widow of Galeazzo Malatesta, delivered a short oration before the emperor Sigismund in 1433; of this there is a translation in King and Rabil 36–8. Caterina

Cibo (1501–57), duchess of Camerino, who is said to have known Hebrew as well as Latin and Greek, Vittoria Colonna (1490–1547), and Olympia Morata (1526–55) were erudite women whose concern with religion was no less notable than their learning. See Bainton *Women of the Reformation in Germany and Italy*.

- 33 The eldest was Margaret, who married William Roper in 1521. The others were Cecily and Elizabeth. A kinswoman, Margaret Giggs, was adopted by More and became a member of his household, treated as another daughter. She married John Clement, who became reader in Greek at Oxford and later court physician. Both husband and wife shared interests in literature and medicine, favourite subjects of Margaret Roper also (More *Correspondence* 254–5; More *Selected Letters* 149). The accomplishments of these four sisters, More's 'school,' convinced others besides Erasmus that More was correct in his opinion about the ability of girls to profit by an education in letters. Erasmus reports in his letters that the More girls are reading Livy, that they are shrewd critics of sermons, and that they write excellent Latin letters to him (Allen Ep 1233:74, 130–6, 1404:1–4 / CWE 1233:81, 145–9, 1404:3–6). More required them to draft and correct English versions of letters before making the Latin versions (*Correspondence* 256; *Selected Letters* 150–1). This sensible procedure is a reminder that although Latin composition in the humanist curriculum was valued primarily for the sake of Latin, it could, and surely did, affect vernacular expression too if the tutor or schoolmaster had the will and wit to pay attention to English while being careful to keep first things – Latin – first. See J.A. Gee 'Margaret Roper's English Version of Erasmus' *Precatio dominica* and the Apprenticeship behind Early Tudor Prose' *Review of English Studies* 13 (1937) 257–71.

Erasmus was the first to bring Thomas More to the attention of continental readers, by printing their translations of Lucian in 1506, and he was More's earliest biographer. The sketch of More he composed for Ulrich von Hutten in 1519 (Ep 999) was supplemented in 1521 by Ep 1233 (to Budé) describing More's family and his daughters' education, and in 1532 by Ep 2750 to Johannes Fabri, bishop of Vienna, on More's public career. To these must be added the dedicatory preface of *Moriae encomium*, the brief letter of 1517 printed with the March 1518 edition of *Utopia* (Ep 635), and anecdotal material in the colloquies 'Marriage,' 'Exorcism,' and 'Sympathy.' More's arguments for the education of young women and the impressive achievements of his daughters caused Erasmus to abandon lingering if unexamined prejudices about the possible dangers to women's morals. He acknowledges this candidly (Allen Ep 1233:103–29 / CWE Ep 1233:112–41). As More wrote to William Gonnell, his children's tutor (1518), erudition in women was a novelty, therefore a reproach to lazy men who would be quick to criticize those women (*Correspondence* 121–2:1–44; *Selected Letters* 103–4). In *Utopia* women attend lectures and some spend their spare time in study (Yale CWM 4 129:6–8, 159:11–14).

Prima inter pares among the More daughters was Margaret, 'the glory of Britain' as Erasmus termed her, and not in mere flattery (Allen Ep 2212:1–2). He inscribed to her a commentary (1524) on two hymns of Prudentius (Ep 1404; the commentary is in LB V 1337C–1358C / CWE 29 171–218). She was credited with declamations and other writings. More began to compose a meditation on sin and death, *The Four Last Things* (c 1522) and asked Margaret to finish

it, but she never did so; see Reynolds *The Field Is Won: The Life and Death of Saint Thomas More* (London 1968) 175–8. Apart from letters, the only surviving specimen of her writing is her translation into English of Erasmus' popular exposition of the Lord's Prayer, *Precatio dominica* (Basel 1523; text in LB v 1219A–1228C). This is believed to have been printed first by de Worde in 1524, but no copy is known. Copies of two later editions, c 1526 (STC 10477) and 1531, survive. See Devereux 176–8 no 27. Although the version of *Enchiridion* thought to be Tyndale's (c 1522) may have been the first translation of Erasmus into English, this work of Margaret Roper's seems the first to be printed in English. The translation is reprinted in *Moreana* 7 (1965) 9–63 with the Latin text and the English in old spelling; again in *Moreana* 9 (1966) 65–92, 10 (1966) 91–109, 11 (1966) 109–18 in modern transcription (with paraphrase in French). Another reprint in old spelling is available in *Erasmus of Rotterdam: A Quincentennial Symposium* ed R.L. DeMolen (New York 1971) 104–24. Richard Hyrde's introduction is reprinted in Watson *Vives and the Renaissance Education of Women* (n5 above) 162–73, *Moreana* 13 (1967) 6–22, and in the DeMolen volume just cited 97–104. Since Margaret's name does not appear in the volume containing the translation, Hyrde (once her tutor), the translator of Vives' book on women, may have been responsible for publication. Her authorship of the translation has not been questioned. See Gee 'Margaret Roper's English Version . . .' (cited earlier in this note) 259–60. Hyrde's eloquent defence of women's study of Greek and Latin, cast in the form of a letter to a young girl, has an importance of its own; no such cogent argument on this subject printed earlier than his in English comes to mind. The date and merits of Margaret Roper's translation give it a place in the history of Tudor prose. More's numerous biographers agree on her unusual attainments and her role as his favourite daughter and confidante. Her biography has been written by E.E. Reynolds (London 1960).

Three English queens in the sixteenth century were scholars or friends of scholars. The most famous of these is Elizabeth I. Princess Mary, who became queen in 1553, was a pupil of Vives. She is credited with a translation of a prayer by Thomas Aquinas and a portion of Erasmus' Paraphrase on the Gospel of John. When completed by her chaplain, this translation was printed, with others by various hands, in the collection of Paraphrases in English issued in 1548–9. By royal injunction the Paraphrases were to be placed in parish churches, and there is evidence that this order was obeyed. Queen Catherine Parr was patroness of the enterprise. It is possible but not proven that she herself translated Matthew, as Strype suggested (*Ecclesiastical Memorials* [Oxford 1822] book 1, chapter 5; II part 1 48). On Catherine Parr see James K. McConica *English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI* (Oxford 1965) chapter 7 and W.P. Haugaard 'Katherine Parr: The Religious Convictions of a Renaissance Queen' *Renaissance Quarterly* 22 (1969) 346–59. The character and history of the Paraphrases are discussed by McConica; E.J. Devereux 'The Publication of the English Paraphrases of Erasmus' *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 51 (1969) 348–67 and *Renaissance English Translations of Erasmus*; Craig R. Thompson 'Erasmus and Tudor England' in *Actes du congrès Erasme . . . Rotterdam 27–29 octobre 1969* (Amsterdam and London 1971) 51–6. A new translation of the Paraphrases is being published in cwe.

Learned ladies in sixteenth-century England, as elsewhere, were usually of noble birth. Mildred Cooke, later the wife of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, translated a homily by Basil the Great from Greek into Latin. Her younger sister Anne, mother of Francis Bacon, translated Bishop John Jewel's *Apologia ecclesiae Anglicanae*, an essential book for understanding the English church in that century, into English (1564). Lady Jane Lumley was another scholar, though her faulty translation of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulide*, purportedly from the Greek, was actually made from Erasmus' Latin version (F.D. Crane 'Euripides, Erasmus and Lady Lumley' *Classical Journal* 39 [1943-4] 223-8, and see Margolin *Bibliographie érasmiennne* (1936-1949) no 830). An often quoted paragraph of Ascham's *Schoolmaster* (1570) describes Lady Jane Grey's love of Greek and other studies (*English Works* [n5 above] 201-2). Ascham was once tutor to the princess Elizabeth, who became the most learned queen of the century: 'Beside her perfit readines, in Latin, Italian, French, & Spanish, she readeth here now at Windsore more Greeke euery day, than some Prebendarie of this Chirch doth read Latin in a whole weeke' (*English Works* 219).

When Marot translated or paraphrased *Abbatiss et eruditae* into French c 1548, he kept Erasmus' allusion to More's learned daughters but sensibly substituted 'la seur du roi' and 'Les nobles filles de Soubize' for the German women, whom the French would not know. On these noble daughters see Mayer's edition (500 above) 265:335-43n. When Henry VIII was in need of a queen in 1539, Cromwell became interested in Anne of Cleves. His agent, after visiting her, reported that 'Frenche, Latyn, or other langiage she hath none, for they take it heere in Germanye for a rebuke and an occasion of lightnesse that great ladyes shuld be learnyd or have enye knowledge of musike' (LP XIV part 2 no 33 pages 8-9).

- 34 If, as seems to be the case, women of literary cultivation with knowledge of ancient languages were more numerous, or at any rate more easily identified, in Italy than in Germany, the difference may have been due to more frequent access to courts or urban society in Italy. However that may be, Erasmus knew or knew of German women who deserved the kind of praise he gave to learned women in other lands.

His old friend Willibald Pirckheimer of Nürnberg (1470-1530) had eight sisters, seven of whom were nuns, and of his five daughters three were nuns; see *Willibald Pirckheimers Briefwechsel* ed Emil Reicke, 3 vols (Munich 1940-89). Charitas, the oldest of the sisters, was abbess of the convent of St Clara in Nürnberg, where she was succeeded by her sister Clara. Though little of their writing, aside from that by Charitas, remains, the Pirckheimer sisters were famed for learning. A few Latin letters survive, but the writers were too shy to send letters to Erasmus. His books were always in their hands, as their father assures him. Within three months after publication of Erasmus' edition of the Greek New Testament (1516) Pirckheimer informs him that Charitas and Clara are delighted with it and that it 'appeals greatly to women who are more learned than many men who think they know something' (Allen Ep 409:28-31 / CWE Ep 409:29-33).

Ambrosius and Thomas Blarer, brothers, lived most of their lives in Constance. Thomas, who was town councillor, had come under the influence of Luther and Melancthon and became a Lutheran. Ambrosius, prior of a Benedictine abbey,

followed the same course, leaving his monastery in 1522. See Allen Ep 1396 introduction and CEBR. Margarete, their sister, was accounted a good Latinist, but whether Erasmus refers to the sister or a daughter is uncertain.

Another learned German woman known to Erasmus was Margarethe Peutingering, wife of Konrad Peutingering of Augsburg (1465–1547). Their specialty was archaeology (see Allen Ep 1247 introduction). Ep 1247 describes a pleasant domestic scene: Peutingering, entertaining himself on a Sunday with his collection of coins and a volume of Tacitus, is interrupted by Margarethe, who is comparing Erasmus' Latin translation (1519) of the New Testament with an old German version. She wonders why Erasmus' text seems to add something to Matt 20:22 ('and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with') that the German version omits. They find the answer by consulting Erasmus' annotations to the Greek text. In a postscript to her husband's letter reporting these matters to Erasmus, Margarethe adds the reading in the German translation.

We hear of a thirteen-year-old German girl who read Latin with her father (Allen *Age of Erasmus* 98). More than once Erasmus praises the Canter family of Friesland, girls as well as boys, who were celebrated for learning. The children were taught early to speak only Latin in the household (as Montaigne was); even the maidservant spoke Latin. See Allen Ep 32 introduction; *De pueris instituendis* LB I 503A / ASD I-2 52:1–2 / CWE 26 322 / *Declamatio de pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis* ed J.-C. Margolin (Geneva 1966) 540 n493; CEBR.

- 35 The pronoun is plural; here and in the next paragraph she means 'you and your kind.'
- 36 For ignorant monks and pretentious prelates are out of date in an age when women know Latin (Allen Ep 1469:244–7 / CWE Ep 1469:265–7). In *Utopia* widows of advanced age are sometimes admitted to the priesthood (Yale cwm 4 228, 229), an absurdity to More except in *Utopia*. See Surtz *Praise of Wisdom* 162–4. Rabelais' Gargantua makes brief allusion to women's desire for the 'heavenly manna of good learning' (*Gargantua and Pantagruel* 2.8). M.A. Screech takes this to mean a wish to study theology (*Rabelaisian Marriage* [London 1958] 26). The archbishop of Mainz (1485) was alarmed by the prospect of German translations of Scripture falling into the hands of uneducated men and of women (Karl Mirbt *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums und des römischen Katholismus* 6th ed rev Kurt Aland [Tübingen 1967] no 781). In his second preface, *pio lectori*, to the Paraphrase on Matthew (1521) Erasmus could say that he 'would rather listen to certain young women talking about Christ than hear certain men generally considered great doctors [*rabinos*],' and he reminds readers of Paula and Eustochium and other women praised by Jerome for their knowledge of Scripture (LB VII **2 verso; on this additional preface see Craig R. Thompson 'Jerome and the Testimony of Erasmus in Disputes over the Vernacular Bible' in *Proceedings of the Patristic, Mediaeval, and Renaissance Conference* 6 [Augustinian Historical Institute, Villanova University 1981] 1–36). By 'talking about Christ' Erasmus does not mean preaching. On preaching in church, *in publico coetu*, he accepts the Pauline injunctions of 1 Tim 2:11–12, that it is appropriate for women 'to learn and not to teach when present at an assembly of men ... Speaking in a meeting is the role of men' (Paraphrase on First Timothy LB VII 1042D / CWE 44 17). Calvin, although he expresses no desire

that women should preach in church, emphasizes the distinctions between what is divinely ordained and what is merely customary or convenient (much as Erasmus does on other subjects in 'A Fish Diet'). Precisely how to interpret 1 Tim 2:12 is left uncertain (ICR 4.10.29–31). But for a woman to preach in church would be rejected by orthodox, conservative churchmen, since that would imply the priesthood of women – a wild notion that staggers our abbot in the colloquy. Thanks to printing, private and public reading and discussion of biblical texts and teachings were more common activities at this date, 1524, than they had been in Erasmus' youth, except in England. Vernacular translations of the Bible and of the Psalter were printed many times in German, Italian, French, and Dutch by 1500, but not in English. (See, in my 1981 article mentioned above, the references on page 14, and another article, 'Scripture for the Ploughboy and Some Others' in *Studies in the Continental Background of Renaissance English Literature* ed Dale B.J. Randall and G.W. Williams [Durham, NC 1977] 3–28, especially 3–16). Few if any arguments for vernacular Scriptures were better known than those of Erasmus, particularly those in his *Paraclesis* (LB VI *3–*4 verso), which he repeats many times. In England the reaction to Lollardy led to the prohibition (1408) of making or reading, whether in public or privately, of any vernacular translation of Scripture without official ecclesiastical permission, which was not granted before the late 1530s. For Latin text and translation of the constitution of 1408 see *Records of the English Bible: The Documents Relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1526–1611* ed A.E. Pollard (London 1911) 79–81. In the 1520s copies of the first New Testament printed in English – Tyndale's version, printed in Germany – had to be smuggled into England. Tyndale paid with his life for his translating.

Urbanus Rhegius (Urban Rieger), who had been cathedral preacher in Augsburg but by January 1522 was on the road to Lutheranism, wrote to Erasmus in that month that he had heard a matron 'discoursing on Law and gospel in Paul's Epistle to the Romans with much more knowledge than those great doctors of divinity would have shown in the old days – so much has your clarion call roused the whole world to the philosophy of Christ' (Allen Ep 1253:24–7 / CWE Ep 1253:26–9). He means the *Paraclesis*.

Etienne Le Court, a French priest condemned by the Paris faculty of theology for propositions preached in 1531 and earlier, was accused of saying that, now that God has willed the Bible to be in French, 'women will assume the office of bishops, and bishops the office of women. Women will preach the Gospel, while bishops will embroider with young girls' (Farge *Orthodoxy and Reform* 199). Le Court was condemned as a heretic in 1533 and strangled and burned, the fate of Tyndale also in 1536.

- 37 A reversal of roles. Cf 'The Sermon' 940:21–2: 'hardly fit to preach to geese.' Magdalia's meaning is: 'If you lazy clerics continue to dodge your duty of preaching, laymen instead will preach, whether you like it or not, rather than put up with no preaching at all.' This warning resumes the comments on tongue-tied pastors in 'The Well-to-do Beggars' (see nn46, 48). John Lambert, a convert to Protestantism who was later an associate of Tyndale in Antwerp, was arrested, brought back to England in 1522 and charged by Archbishop Warham (Erasmus' patron) with heresy. He was imprisoned, then released, but in 1538 brought before Archbishop Cranmer. One of the 45 articles (no 23)

he had to answer was 'Whether thou believest that it is lawful for laymen of both kinds, that is to wit, both men and women, to sacrifice and preach the word of God?' In his answer he summarizes the present colloquy of Erasmus, who 'giveth a watch-word touching somewhat my purpose.' He paraphrases Magdalia's words in lines 4–7 by 'Sir, if you continue therein so dull as you have done, and daily do, the world perceiving it (as they begin fast to grow quick in sight), it is to be feared lest they will set you beside the saddle, and put us in your room' (Foxye *Acts and Monuments* v 208). Lambert's defence was able and elaborate but in vain: he was condemned and the next morning burned at the stake. Foxye gives a long account of the case (v 181–250).

A broadsheet published in Germany after Luther's death shows him holding a Bible and a crucifix while the Holy Spirit shines upon him. At his feet is a goose reading a book. 'Goose' in Bohemian is 'husa.' The goose here is a pictorial allusion to the endeavours of Luther and Hus to place the Bible into the hands of the laity (for the picture see R.W. Scribner *For the Sake of Simple Folk* [Cambridge 1986] 220).

- 38 On the ancient metaphor that all the world's a stage see *Translations of Lucian* Yale cwm 3 part 1 144–5. More probably borrowed the figure from Lucian's *Menippus*, which he had translated; see also Ernst R. Curtius *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* trans Willard R. Trask (New York 1953) 138–44. The idea that the world seems upside down nowadays is found in two other colloquies, 'The New Mother' 592:17–35 and 'Cyclops' 869:32–870:4. On this figure see Curtius 94–8 and Scribner (see preceding note) 164–8.

THE EPITHALAMIUM OF PIETER GILLIS

Epithalamium Petri Aegidii

First printed in the August–September 1524 edition.

In this dialogue, the final version of a composition drafted ten years earlier, Erasmus congratulates an old friend, Pieter Gillis of Antwerp, on his marriage and pays tribute to the memory of another friend, Jérôme de Busleyden of Louvain, Brussels, and Mechelen. These two names are forever connected with Thomas More's also, for it was through Gillis – so we are told in *Utopia* – that More met Raphael Hythloday, the Portuguese voyager who describes the island of Utopia. The first edition of *Utopia* was introduced by a letter of 1 November 1516 from Gillis to Busleyden, another from Busleyden to More, and More's own prefatory letter to Gillis (Yale CWM 4 20–5, 32–7, 38–45).

When More accompanied a diplomatic mission to the Burgundian Netherlands in 1515, Erasmus wrote a letter from London recommending him to Gillis' hospitality (Allen Ep 332:15–19 / CWE Ep 332:16–21). Gillis (1486–1533) was then town clerk of Antwerp. He had been known to Erasmus since 1503 or 1504 when, as a printer's corrector, he worked on one of Erasmus' early books, *Lucubrationculae*. Many letters testifying to their common interests and to Erasmus' paternal concern for the younger man's welfare survive; Ep 476 is a good example. Gillis' marriage to Cornelia Sandrien took place in or near August 1514. In October of that year, at the end of a letter dedicating his *Paraboliae* to Gillis, Erasmus referred to his *Epithalamium* as something not yet finished or published (Allen Ep 312:86–8 CWE Ep 312:93–5). A year later he was promising to bring it out soon (Allen Ep 356:12–13 / CWE Ep 356:13–14), but it was laid aside and did not appear until 1524. Some years earlier, most likely in 1517 or 1518, a passage eulogizing Jérôme de Busleyden was added, and thus what had been intended originally as a marriage song alone became a comment on academia as well.

On Gillis see CEBR and E. Bernstein 'Erasmus and Pieter Gillis: The Development of a Friendship' ERSY 3 (1983) 130–45.

In May 1517 Erasmus informed More that he and Pieter Gillis were being painted on the same panel, which, when ready, would be sent to More as a gift (Ep 584). He does not give the name of the painter in this letter. When the diptych arrived in England some five months later, More was delighted and wrote enthusiastically about it to Erasmus and to Gillis (Epp 683, 684). His letter to Gillis identified the artist, Quinten Metsys. The portrait of Gillis in the Radnor collection at Longford Castle is reproduced in Allen II plate 3

after page 576 and in CWE 4 371. The original portrait of Erasmus that filled the other half of the diptych was long thought to be one now in the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Rome (this is the picture facing Gillis in Allen II plate 3 and CWE 4 370). But it is now known that another version of this portrait, at Hampton Court, is very likely the Metsys original and therefore the picture that was sent to More. The one in Rome does not conform, as the Hampton Court picture does, to More's description in his letter to Gillis (Ep 684). For the evidence see M.M. Phillips 'The Mystery of the Metsys Portrait' *Erasmus in English* 7 (1975) 18–21; Lorne Campbell, M.M. Phillips, Hubertus Schulte Herbrüggen, and J.B. Trapp 'Quentin Metsys, Desiderius Erasmus, Pieter Gillis and Thomas More' *The Burlington Magazine* 120 (1978), 716–25; J.B. Trapp 'A Postscript to Metsys' *The Burlington Magazine* 121 (1979) 434–7. The Hampton Court portrait is reproduced in the first and second of these articles.

ALYPIUS, BALBINUS,¹ THE MUSES

Alypius Immortal God, what strange sight do I behold here?

Balbinus Either you see what's nowhere to be seen or my eyes are going bad.²

Alypius But it's a marvellous and lovely spectacle.

Balbinus You torment me! Tell me, where do you see it?

Alypius To the left, on this woody hill.

Balbinus I do see the hill.

10 **Alypius** Don't you see the band of maidens?

Balbinus What's come into your head to make fun of me like that? I don't see the slightest sign of a maiden anywhere.

Alypius Hush! They're coming out of the wood. – Oh, what splendour, what grace! This is a more than mortal show.

15 **Balbinus** What madness incites this man?

Alypius I recognize them: they're the nine Muses and the three Graces.³ I wonder what they're doing. Never have I seen maidens more exquisite or more sprightly. They're all crowned with laurel, and each one carries her own instrument. And how lovingly the Graces cling to each other! How comely their loose, flowing robes!

20 **Balbinus** But I've never heard anyone more raving than you.

Alypius On the contrary, you've seen no one happier than I.

Balbinus Why do you alone have eyes here?

Alypius Because you haven't drunk from the fountain of the Muses.⁴ For
25 only those who have done so can be aware of the Muses.

Balbinus As for me, I've drunk plentifully from Scotus' fountain.⁵

Alypius That's not the fountain of the Muses but a frog pond.

Balbinus Can't you arrange for me too to see this sight?

Alypius I could if there were a laurel here,⁶ because water from a clear spring, if sprinkled on the eyes with laurel, enables them to see such sights distinctly.

Balbinus Look, here's a laurel; here's a little fountain.

Alypius Convenient, to be sure.

Balbinus Sprinkle.

10 **Alypius** Look hard. Do you see?

Balbinus As much as I did before. Sprinkle again.

Alypius Now do you see?

Balbinus Just as much. Sprinkle more liberally.

Alypius You see now, I dare say.

15 **Balbinus** No, I scarcely see you.

Alypius Wretched man, how deep the darkness⁷ that blinds your eyes! This stratagem would give even a wagoner sight. But there's no reason to be tormented. Maybe it's better not to see, lest when looking at the Muses you be rewarded as Actaeon was for gazing on Diana.⁸ There'd be danger of
20 their turning you into a porcupine or wild boar or hog or camel or frog or jackdaw. Still, I'll make you hear, provided you don't cause any trouble. They're turning this way now; let's run to meet them. Hail, thrice-looked-for goddesses!

Muses And hail to you, lover of the Muses!⁹

25 **Alypius** Why do you pluck at me?

Balbinus You don't carry out your promise.

Alypius Don't you hear?

Balbinus Yes, I hear – but as an ass hears a lyre.¹⁰

Alypius Then I'll speak Latin. Where do you go in such array and with such
30 joy? Not paying a call on the University of Louvain, are you?¹¹

Muses Don't mention *that*, if you please.

Alypius Why?

Muses What have we to do with that place, where so many swine grunt, asses bray, camels bleat,¹² daws scream, magpies chatter?

35 **Alypius** But you have worshippers there, too.

Muses We know; and we'll move there some years later. Not yet has the cycle of ages brought that destined day. One there will be who will build us in that place a delightful dwelling, or temple rather, scarcely surpassed anywhere in splendour and sanctity.

40 **Alypius** Is it not lawful to know who will contribute so great a glory to our realm?

Muses Lawful for you, a priest of our sacred rites. Undoubtedly you're familiar with the name of Busleyden, celebrated throughout the whole world.¹³

5 **Alypius** You've named an illustrious family, born to grace the court of the most exalted princes. Who does not venerate the great François de Busleyden, archbishop of Besançon?¹⁴ Single-handed he acted as more than a single Nestor¹⁵ to Philip, son of Maximilian the Great and father of Charles, who will be greater.

10 **Muses** Happy had we been, had not the Fates begrudged the earth that man. How great a Maecenas¹⁶ of good learning he was, how sincere a patron of talents! But he left two brothers: Gilles,¹⁷ a man of admirable judgment and discretion, and Jérôme.¹⁸

Alypius Jérôme we know as one highly proficient in every branch of literature, adorned with every kind of virtue.

15 **Muses** The Fates will not permit him to live long, though none is more deserving of immortality.

Alypius How do you know that?

Muses Apollo told us.

20 **Alypius** What envy is this on the part of the Fates, that they promptly take away the best of everything?

Muses This is not the time to discuss that. – Now this Jérôme, dying to the highest eulogies, will leave his entire fortune for the founding of a college at Louvain, where men of vast learning will give free public instruction in the three languages.¹⁹ This act will add great honour both
25 to studies and to Charles' glory. Then we'll dwell at Louvain without distaste.

Alypius And so where do you go now?

Muses To Antwerp.

Alypius The Muses and Graces going to market?

30 **Muses** Not at all: to a wedding.

Alypius What have virgins to do with a wedding?

Muses To such a wedding as this it is not improper for virgins to go.

Alypius What wedding do you mean, then?

35 **Muses** A sacred, pure, chaste one, which Pallas²⁰ herself would not be ashamed to attend – and will attend, I think.

Alypius May not one know the name of the bride and groom?

Muses That irreproachable youth, most accomplished in all the graces of polite learning, is not unknown to you, I dare say – Pieter Gillis.

Alypius You've named a jewel, not a man.

40 **Muses** Cornelia, a young maiden worthy of Apollo himself, is to marry him.

Alypius He's been an exceptional votary of yours from his earliest years, certainly.

Muses Therefore we'll sing him a marriage song.

Alypius And will the Graces dance?

- 5 **Muses** Not only dance but also unite the two purest hearts by indissoluble bonds of mutual good will, that no anger or boredom may ever come between them. For the rest of her days she'll hear nothing but 'my darling'; he in turn nothing but 'sweetheart.' And not even old age will diminish this joy but rather enhance it.

- 10 **Alypius** I'd be surprised if those who live in that fashion could grow old.

Muses Quite right, for it will be mellowness rather than old age.

Alypius But I know a great many for whom this sweet language has turned into something far different within three months, and dishes and trenchers, instead of merry jokes, would fly about at the feast. Instead of 'sweetheart'

- 15 the husband would hear 'blockhead' 'boozer,' 'soak'; the wife, 'breeding sow,' 'booby,' 'plague.'²¹

Muses True enough, but marriages of that sort were made when the Graces were hostile. In this marriage cheerfulness and good manners will promote mutual affection.

- 20 **Alypius** What you describe is indeed a rare blessing in marriage.

Muses Unusual happiness becomes virtues so unusual.

Alypius What? Will the marriage take place without Juno and Venus?

Muses Juno, the quarrelsome goddess who seldom gets along with Jove,²² certainly will not attend. And surely not that earthly and sottish Venus, but

- 25 the other, heavenly one who joins hearts together.²³

Alypius A barren marriage, then, you tell me of.

Muses By no means: a most happily fruitful one.

Alypius What does that heavenly goddess bring forth except souls?

Muses Oh, she adds bodies, too, but ones suited to those same souls, as if

- 30 you enclosed perfume in a jewelled perfume box.

Alypius Where is she?

Muses Look: she approaches in the distance.

Alypius I see! Immortal God, what dazzling brightness, what majestic beauty! Beside this one, the other Venus is dowdy.

- 35 **Muses** You see how gentle the Cupids are – not at all blind, like those through whom the other Venus maddens men's minds, but extremely keen-sighted.²⁴ And they do not bear fiercely blazing torches but softly glowing flames; nor do they have heavy darts to implant hatred of the lover and torment wretched minds with unrequited love.²⁵

- 40 **Alypius** Clearly they take after their mother. O that blessed dwelling and most dear to the gods! But may one hear the marriage song you bring?

Muses Rather we ask you to be willing to hear it.²⁶

Clio *Pieter with laurel crownèd is groom to the lovely Cornelia.*

Blessings upon this pair; favour them, heavenly powers!

Melpomene *May they like turtledoves in peace and concord dwell,*

5 *And live as cheerful as the crow!*

Thalia *He'll surpass Tiberius Gracchus in the excellence of love,*

Hero who for life of consort sacrificed his own life dear.²⁷

Euterpe *She in turn – let her resemble King Admetus' faithful spouse,*

Who to save her royal husband willingly laid down her life.²⁸

10 **Terpsichore** *Let an ardour equal to Plancius'²⁹ blaze, but*

Grant him better fortune than Plancius': Death took

Her whom he loved, his dear wife, and brought him

Sorrow unending.

Erato *Let her not be wanting in ardour, but may*

15 *She find better fate than did Portia, wife whom*

Cruel death deprived of a matchless husband,

Glorious Brutus.³⁰

Calliope *Even Nasica famed for virtue might not*

This groom's virtuous manners equal for long.³¹

20 **Urania** *Chaste in mind as in manner, O let this maid*

Outdo Roman Sulpicia when she is wed.³²

Polyhymnia *O may mother bring forth babes to resemble her;³³*

May wealth mingle with good fame in the household;

May spite's liverish mien never be known to it;

25 *But may good deeds be its only and true renown.*

Alypius Truly I'd envy that Pieter Gillis, were not the man so good-natured he himself couldn't envy anyone.

Muses But now it's time for us to resume our journey.

Alypius Have you no message for Louvain meanwhile?

30 **Muses** Greet all our honest friends and followers in our name, but particularly that veteran champion of our band, Johannes Paludanus;³⁴ and Jodocus Gaverius,³⁵ Maarten van Dorp,³⁶ and Johannes Borsalus.³⁷

Alypius I'll take good care to do so. What else?

Muses I'll tell you in your ear.³⁸ [*Whispers.*]

35 **Alypius** That doesn't cost much, so it shall be done as soon as possible.

NOTES

1 The name Alypius, meaning 'one free from pain or sorrow' (ἀλυπος), may be a recollection of Plato *Republic* 9.585A or Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1.5 1361b30. Balbinus,

- borrowed from Horace *Satires* 1.3.40, is used again of an impercipient character in another colloquy first printed in this edition, the priest in 'Alchemy.'
- 2 *Deum immortalem ... aut mei parum prospiciunt oculi*. Two Terentian echoes; cf *Adelphi* 447 and *Phormio* 353, *Phormio* 735. With Balbinus' inability to see what the other man sees compare 'Exorcism' 535:28–536:6; these are Lucianic touches. Note that Balbinus is not mentioned after 522:28.
 - 3 Patronesses of polite learning (Clio, goddess of history; Melpomene, tragedy; Thalia, comedy; Euterpe, music; Terpsichore, dancing; Erato, lyric poetry; Calliope, epic poetry; Urania, astronomy; Polyhymnia, sacred song) and of kindness and benevolence (Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia) respectively, as the guests at 'The Profane Feast' are aware (146:30–2). In his *Epithalamion* Edmund Spenser may have been indebted to this colloquy for the idea of Muses and Graces going to a wedding together (D.T. Starnes and E.W. Talbert *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries* [Chapel Hill 1955] 90). The comic notion of their going to market (523:29) is original with Erasmus.
 - 4 Hippocrene, on Mount Helicon in Boeotia
 - 5 See 'Additional *formulae*' n16 and 'The Godly Feast' n190.
 - 6 A laurel crown was an ornament of Apollo, divine patron of the arts, especially poetry and music.
 - 7 Greek τὸ σκότος, with punning reference to Scotus
 - 8 He was torn to pieces by hounds as punishment for watching Diana bathe; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 3.138–252.
 - 9 The salutation and reply are in Greek.
 - 10 That is, uncomprehending. See *Adagia* I iv 35, a common proverb often used by Erasmus when deriding those who pretend to understand what they know nothing about or try to undertake something they are grotesquely unfitted for.
 - 11 Erasmus spent most of the time between July 1517 and October 1521 in Louvain.
 - 12 Erasmus likes the resemblance between 'camel' and 'Carmelite.' One of his enemies, Nicolaas Baechem, was a Carmelite of Louvain. See 'Rash Vows' n14.
 - 13 Of this 'illustrious family' Erasmus names three brothers. The fourth, Valérien (d 1514), he does not mention.
 - 14 François (I) de Busleyden, archbishop of Besançon from 1498 until his death in 1502. He had been tutor to Archduke Philip (on whom see next note). In *Adagia* II v 1 Busleyden is praised as 'a man without peer in every way' (LB II 553C / CWE 33 240). See further Henry de Vocht *Jérôme de Busleyden Humanistica Lovaniensia* 9 (Turnhout 1950) 4–8.
 - 15 That is, an aged and wise counsellor, as Nestor in the *Iliad* was to the Greeks; *Adagia* I ii 56. Philip the Handsome (d 1506), archduke of Austria and titular duke of Burgundy, was a son of the emperor Maximilian I (d 1519). For an anecdote about Maximilian see 'The Fabulous Feast' 582:5–41. Philip's son Charles V (d 1556) became emperor in 1519. Erasmus wrote a *Panegyricus ad Philipppum Austriae ducem* which was printed in 1504 and later revised and reprinted; text in LB IV 507–50 / ASD VI-1 26–93; translation in CWE 27 1–75. In 1515 or 1516 Erasmus became a member of the then prince Charles' council, an honorary position that brought him at irregular intervals a pension. How long he remained in the council is uncertain. See Allen Ep 370:18n.

- 16 Friend of Augustus and patron of Virgil, Horace, and Propertius
- 17 Oldest of the brothers (d 1536). He had been a councillor and master of the accounts of Brabant.
- 18 Jérôme, like François, was a wealthy churchman and a patron of learning. Erasmus, wishing to connect the two disparate subjects of the dialogue – Pieter Gillis' wedding in Antwerp (summer of 1514) and the establishment of the Collegium Trilingue in Louvain provided by the bequest of Jérôme de Busleyden (1517) – does so through the Muses' assurance that they are concerned with both Antwerp and Louvain and will go to Louvain 'some years later' (522:36, 523:25–6). On the three Busleydens see additionally CEBR.
- 19 Institutes for the study of the three languages most essential to 'good learning,' Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, were organized in half a dozen places in the early sixteenth century. Among them were the trilingual college at the new University of Alcalá, where the Complutensian Polyglot edition of the Bible was prepared; Corpus Christi College, Oxford; Christ's and St John's Colleges, Cambridge; the Collège de France; the College of St Nicholas at the University of Vienna. Such foundations, products of the desire of enlightened benefactors to promote Christian scholarship through philological studies, emphasized interests and methods that gradually affected all the humanistic disciplines. The purposes and promise of these institutes are perhaps not easy for us to appreciate, because the idea on which they were based has become too commonplace. But in their time they were novelties, exciting to some, unwelcome to others – as Erasmus' writings make clear. He was one of their most zealous and persuasive supporters, as anyone would infer after examination of his *Ratio verae theologiae*, *Paraclesis*, editions of the Fathers, notes to the New Testament, prefaces to the Paraphrases, as well as his *Antibarbari*, letters, and apologies. He concedes the possibility that a man might write something correctly (*aliquid recte*) on theology even if he knows no language but English (*Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* LB IX 86E–F), but to do so without knowledge of the sacred tongues would be rash at best. This conviction was not inconsistent with Erasmus' repeated advocacy of vernacular translations of the New Testament for ordinary men and women. To read and profit by the words of Christ in the Gospels is one thing, a thing every serious, literate person can do. To analyse and expound systematic theology is something else – something that cannot safely be left to the unlearned. And, as he says in the adage about 'unwashed hands' (I ix 55), to interpret Scripture when ignorant of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew is impious and profane; whoever does this is not a theologian but a violator of theology. See his Ep 337 to Dorp and his cogent yet temperate reply to Jacobus Latomus' *De trium linguarum et studii theologici ratione dialogus* (1519) LB IX 79A–106E; and cf *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 787E–788A, 795E–796B. Latomus' dialogue and an *apologia* for it are reprinted in his *Opera* (Louvain 1550) 158–68, 169–71. On the controversy with Latomus, a significant one because it produced one of Erasmus' strongest defences of linguistic and literary scholarship in biblical and theological studies, see further 'A Fish Diet' n186.

Busleyden's bequest of 1517 provided for a college consisting of a president, three professors of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and eight (later ten) students supported by stipends. The professors were to give public lectures as well as

the usual intramural instruction. Vested interests in the University of Louvain hindered the new college at first, but it survived, despite some difficult years. Erasmus wrote a glowing account of it, perhaps exaggerated, in 1521 (Allen Ep 1221:10–35 / CWE Ep 1221:14–42); there were then twelve students. To him this college seemed exactly what was needed; Greek studies above all could be the salvation of universities, the antidote to an excessive devotion to logic and Aristotelianism. On Greek there in 1532–3 see M.E. Screech 'Greek in the Collège Trilingue of Paris and the Collegium Trilingue at Louvain ...' BHR 48 (1986) 85–90. The more Erasmus was harried by theologians of the old order, the more he favoured the college. He tried to help find professors, and he kept in touch with its affairs as long as he lived. At one time he talked of leaving his library to it (Allen Ep 699:17–18 / CWE Ep 699:22–3) but before his death this had been sold. In October 1550 Roger Ascham visited the college. He attended a lecture on Sophocles, with eighty noisy students, and concluded that the college was inferior to his own in Cambridge (*The Whole Works of Roger Ascham* ed J.A. Giles, 3 vols (London 1864–5; repr New York 1965) 1 part 2 248–9).

The most valuable accounts of Jérôme de Busleyden and the Collegium Trilingue, superseding earlier studies, are Henry de Vocht's *Jérôme de Busleyden* (n14 above) and *History of the Foundation and the Rise of the Collegium Trilingue Lovaniense, 1517–1550* *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 10–13, 4 vols (Louvain 1951–5). With a wealth of detail, the latter work brings the college through its numerous early difficulties to the period when it achieved great distinction. Its services to learning continued until, like the rest of the university, it was suppressed during the French Revolution. Allen's *Lectures* include (138–63) an interesting essay on the various trilingual colleges of the early sixteenth century. On Erasmus' relations with the Louvain theologians such supplementary studies as Jacques Etienne *Spiritualisme érasmien et théologiens louvanistes* (Louvain and Gembloux 1956) and M. Nauwelaerts 'Erasmus à Louvain: éphémérides d'un séjour de 1517 à 1521' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* 1 3–24 are useful.

20 Athena

21 Xanthippe in the colloquy 'Marriage' among them. Two of the epithets used there (310:5, 26) are repeated here, 'mushroom' (*fungus*, here translated 'blockhead') and 'brood sow' (*scrophia*). On *fungus* see *Adagia* IV i 38 and IV x 98. The word here translated 'booby' is *Acco*, a proverbial name for a vain, silly woman; see *Adagia* II ii 99.

22 Consort of Jove and goddess of women, she presides over marriage.

23 Venus, the Greek Aphrodite, goddess of love, is the mother of Eros (Cupid), as we are reminded in 'Courtship' (261:35). In the *Symposium* of Plato 180c–d a distinction, influential in subsequent literature and art, is made between a heavenly or Uranian Aphrodite who is the symbol of pure love, and an earthly or Pandemian Aphrodite. The heavenly Aphrodite is honoured by lovers of the soul; the Pandemian goddess by mortals addicted to sensuality and sexual love. It is the heavenly Venus, not the 'earthly and sottish' one, who solemnizes the marriage of Pieter Gillis and his bride.

24 Cupid was sometimes said to be, or was shown as, blind or blindfolded. Erasmus affirms that the Cupid who is the son of the terrestrial Venus ('the other Venus') is blind (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 681f); that is why

lovers struck by his darts often make irrational judgments. In classical art and literature, however, Cupid is almost never represented as blind, although his victims may be 'blinded' with respect to the objects of their passion. In certain medieval representations Cupid does have his eyes bandaged (as in Boccaccio *Genealogia deorum* 9.4.). On 'blind Cupid' see Erwin Panofsky *Studies in Iconology* (New York 1939) 95–128; the quotation from Boccaccio is on 107 n40 there. In the colloquy Erasmus is thinking of this later tradition. Both here and elsewhere he emphasizes the difference between the harm done by the earthly Cupid who 'maddens men's minds' and the good by the other Cupid, son of the heavenly Venus. The first blinds its victims; the second gives sight to the spiritually blind (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 682A–B).

- 25 Cf 'Courtship' 262:1–5.
- 26 On the metres see CWE 85–6 356–61, 717–18 no 132. The verses by Clio and Melpomene are similar in form and theme, as are those by Thalia and Euterpe, Terpsichore and Erato, Calliope and Urania. Polyhymnia's sums up the spirit of this epithalamium. For other occasional verse see 'The Poetic Feast' 391:4–7, 9–10, 405:2–4, 17–22, 26–8, 31–3, 36–9, 405:40–406:2, 406:27–30.
- 27 Twice Roman consul (177, 163 BC). In response to a soothsayer's interpretation of a prodigy, he killed himself so that his wife Cornelia might live (Plutarch *Tiberius Gracchus* 1.1). Two of their sons, Tiberius and Gaius, 'the Gracchi,' were famous statesmen and reformers.
- 28 See Euripides *Alcestis* and *Adagia* II vi 22. The Fates agreed to rescind their decree of early death for Admetus if he could persuade someone to die in his stead. His father and mother refused, but his faithful wife Alcestis consented and died for him. When Hercules learned of this he captured Alcestis from Thanatos, the messenger from Hades, and restored her to Admetus.
- 29 So Erasmus' text, but erroneously for 'Plautius.' Valerius Maximus 4.6.2–3 tells of two men of this name, C. Plautius Numida and M. Plautius, who killed themselves because of grief over the death of a wife. M. Plautius had himself cremated in the same pyre that consumed the body of his lately deceased wife.
- 30 More correctly 'Porcia.' She was the daughter of Cato of Utica and wife of Brutus. According to one tradition she killed herself after the death of Brutus (the assassin of Julius Caesar), who died after defeat in the battle of Philippi in 42 BC.
- 31 Of the three notable Roman soldiers and statesmen named Scipio Nasica, the one probably intended here is Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica, consul in 191 BC.
- 32 A matron honoured by the Romans as a model of chastity; Valerius Maximus 8.15.12
- 33 Gillis' first wife, Cornelia Sandrien, had eight children. She died in 1526, aged about thirty. Gillis then married a widow named Maria Denis, who died not later than January 1530, after bearing one daughter. Erasmus wrote two epitaphs for the first wife, one for the second; texts in CWE 85–6 162–5, 554–5 nos 83, 84, 85 / *Reedijk Poems of Erasmus* 346–8 nos 126, 127, 128. See also his praise of Cornelia, whom he knew well, in Allen Ep 2260:1–20.
- 34 Jean Desmarez (d 1525), long a friend of Erasmus and his host for a time in Louvain (CWE Ep 597:46–7). He was a professor and dean in the university. Erasmus dedicated to him his translation of Lucian's *De mercede conductis* in

- 1506 (Ep 197). A letter from Paludanus to Gillis precedes *Utopia* (Yale CWM 4 26–9). See CEBR.
- 35 Joost Vroye (d 1533), twice rector of the University of Louvain and professor of civil, then canon law. See a memorable letter to him (Ep 1347).
- 36 Dorp and the Englishman Edward Lee were troublesome critics of Erasmus' *Moriae encomium* and of his work on the New Testament. Lee was at the University of Louvain for a few years; Dorp spent his whole career there (d 1525). On Lee, whose harsh criticism of the 1516 New Testament was felt keenly by Erasmus, see R. Coogan 'The Pharisee against the Hellenist: Edward Lee versus Erasmus' *Renaissance Quarterly* 39 (1986) 476–506. See also Erika Rummel *Erasmus and his Catholic Critics 1515–1522* (Nieuwkoop 1989), especially chapter 5 on Lee. With Dorp, a fellow Hollander, Erasmus' relations, though trying at times, were easier, and at Dorp's death he wrote an epitaph on him (CWE 85–6 154–5, 546–7 no 71 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 333–5 no 113). Dorp objected not only to *Moriae encomium* but to Erasmus' emphasis on Greek. See Dorp's letter of c September 1514 and Erasmus' reply of May 1515 (Epp 304, 337). More's brilliant defence of Erasmus, addressed to Dorp (October 1515), is required reading for anyone concerned with these controversies; see *Correspondence* 27–74 / *Selected Letters* 6–64 / Yale CWM 15 1–127.
- 37 Jan Becker of Borssele (d 1526), churchman and scholar. He lived in Louvain from time to time, 1516–28, and knew Erasmus there in 1517–18. He was offered but declined the first professorship of Latin in the Collegium Trilingue.
- 38 An earlier colloquy ends in the same fashion; see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n110.

EXORCISM, OR THE SPECTRE

Exorcismus, sive Spectrum

First printed in the August–September 1524 edition.

This colloquy is the first of four in the August–September 1524 edition that deal with varieties of deception or chicanery. An entertaining exposure of credulity and superstition, ‘Exorcism’ has additional interest because of the very strong probability that Thomas More played a leading part in the tricks described. Some uncertainties of interpretation exist, but these do not spoil the fun for the ordinary reader. For example, there are three characters named Faunus: the father-in-law of Polus named in the beginning of the dialogue, the duped priest who is the victim of the practical joke that is the main business of the plot, and the tormented ‘spirit.’ On this name see n3.

A more perplexing problem is the identity and role of Polus. P.S. Allen believed that this perpetrator of the first deception, that of the ‘dragon in the sky’ episode at Richmond, was Thomas More (Allen Ep 287:5n), who is introduced as the son-in-law of Faunus. This identification seems plausible because More’s fondness for jokes and for playing parts on short notice, or no notice at all, is well attested by his biographers: ‘Yet would he at Christmas-tide suddenly sometimes step in among the players, and never studying for the matter, make a part of his own there presently among them, which made the lookers-on more sport than all the players beside’ (Roper *Life of More* 198). The affair of the imagined dragon in the sky (535:28–536:6) is perfectly in character for him.

So too is the other and main attraction here, a farce about exorcizing a demon. But there are difficulties. If in the first episode Polus is More and the son-in-law of Faunus, then later, when the exorcism is planned, what of Polus’ own son-in-law (husband of his eldest daughter), who is enlisted for this comedy (538:12–13) and plays the part of the devil? If Polus is indeed More, is this other son-in-law William Roper? More’s first wife, Jane Colt, was an eldest daughter; so was Margaret More, who married Roper in 1521. His status as son-in-law would appear to be Roper’s sole qualification for the role of devil in the play; but it is not enough. Roper had nothing of More’s personality and no reputation whatever for dramatic talent. On the contrary the role of the son-in-law who plays the devil is irresistibly appropriate to More himself.

Preserved Smith argued that Polus cannot be More but is John Colt, More’s father-in-law, and that Erasmus is punning on Latin *pullus*, *polus* (Greek πῶλος) ‘colt’ (Key 31–3). In a later colloquy, ‘A Pilgrimage for Re-

ligion's Sake,' he puns similarly on the name of a friend, Pullus, who is certainly John Colet. Smith also called attention to the remark about Polus' custom of hunting and hawking (536:21–2). If Polus were More, this custom would be inconsistent with what we learn elsewhere about More's dislike of hunting ('Hunting' introduction 109). In a story told in 'Marriage' More goes hunting with his father-in-law, but for an unusual purpose, not for the pleasure of the chase (314:24–315:36), and this father-in-law, John Colt, is said to be so clever in acting a part impromptu, without donning a mask, that he can play any role (315:17–19). Yet this is the same claim made by Erasmus, in almost the same language, about Polus the son-in-law of Faunus in 'Exorcism' (535:8–9). Here then is another source of confusion: both Colt and More were gifted actors, resourceful improvisers. And if that is so, the case for Colt being Polus is strengthened, but the Faunus of 535:5 could not be Colt. At any rate identification of Polus with Colt and, later (538:13), of his son-in-law with More cannot be proved beyond question. But if More is both the author of the Richmond joke and plays the part of the devil in the exorcism too, as seems so suitable to his character, he has to be a son-in-law in the first part of the colloquy and a father-in-law in the later part. Not impossible; but then who is the first Faunus if not Colt?

If such questions cannot be answered satisfactorily, so be it; Erasmus was writing fiction, not biography. Since he wrote rapidly, his hand or memory may have slipped at this or that detail. Like any raconteur, he has licence to shift roles and dates – More was not married in 1498, the date of the letter from heaven (540:34–541:9) – to suit his dramatic purposes. The play's the thing, and we may be sure Thomas More is in the cast. We do not know whether Erasmus ever met Colt, but he knew More too well to make him anything less than author and leading actor in this entertainment.

In the absence of other evidence we may conjecture that the colloquy was written in 1522 or 1523. A letter from his friend Botzheim in January 1523 mentions a composition by Erasmus 'de divinatione' and assures him there is no risk in it (Allen and CWE Ep 1335:3). Preserved Smith thought this an implied comparison with Cicero's *De divinatione* and a confidential allusion to Erasmus' 'Exorcism' (communication from Professor Smith). But the two impostures described could have occurred many years earlier. Allen believed that mention of Richmond serves to date that incident 1514. Erasmus was there in February of that year, but he could have heard the anecdote of the 'dragon in the sky' on any of his visits to England. More did not become John Colt's son-in-law until late 1504 or early 1505. Smith suggests that the date of the letter from heaven, 1498, may be a clue to the date of events related in the dialogue and that since Erasmus had not yet visited England by 1498, reports of them reached him through a pupil of his in Paris, Thomas

Grey, an Englishman who appears to have been acquainted with Colt (*Key* 29–33). The name of the second speaker, Anselm ('Anshelmus' in the March 1533 and 1540 editions), Smith takes as a pseudonym for the archbishop of Canterbury, John Morton (d 1500), in whose household More lived for a year or longer as a youth; Morton could have told the story of the dragon to Grey and Grey to Erasmus. So he could, but it seems just as likely that Erasmus heard one or both stories from More himself.

If the account of the exorcism has any connection at all with More's interest in Lucian's *Philopseudes*, as I suspect it has, Erasmus could have heard of that prank any time between late 1505 and 1514; he was in England in 1505, 1506, 1509, and most of the time between August 1511 and June 1514. See my note 'Erasmus, More, and the Conjurament of Spirits: The Possible Source of a Practical-Joke' *Moreana* 24 (1969) 45–50. If 1498 is accepted as the date of the letter, Erasmus might have heard of the exorcism very early in his acquaintance with More, but there is no reason to take '1498' so seriously.

The apparition and the letter from heaven recall Lucian's comedy and irony. His *Philopseudes* includes an exorcism (section 31), and *Menippus* satirizes credulity and superstition. Both dialogues were translated into Latin by More, whose versions, with some by Erasmus, were first printed in 1506 (see the introduction to these volumes xxviii and n28). In the preface to his translations More says *Philopseudes* is a salutary reminder to be on our guard against deceptions. Erasmus says the same of 'Exorcism' in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1103:18–25.

A fragment containing six pages of a Tudor translation of 'Exorcism' by Thomas Johnson (London 1567) survives in the Bodleian Library (Vet. A.1.e.53); see Devereux 71 no 4.15.1. The text of these pages corresponds to 535:16–536:25, 537:32–538:15 below. The interlocutors are Thomas, Anthony, Faune, and Pole. The translation is fairly competent but somewhat stilted.

On More's interest in dramatics see H.B. Norland 'The Role of Drama in More's Literary Career' in *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 13 no 4 (1982) 59–75.

THOMAS, ANSELM

Thomas What's the good news that makes you chuckle so merrily, as if you had stumbled upon a treasure?

5 **Anselm** Your guess is not far from the mark.¹

Thomas But you'll let an old friend in on your good luck, won't you?

Anselm Oh, yes, I've been hoping for a long time to run across someone to share the fun with.

Thomas Come on, then; out with it.

A very mery and plea-
saunt Historie done not long
since, in this realm of England.

Written in Latine by Erasmus of
*Roterodame, Dialoguewise, vn-
der the title of a Coniu-
ration or Spirite.*

*Nowly translated into English,
by Thomas Iohnson.*



Imprinted at London, by Henrie
Bynneman, for William Pickering.
ANNO DOMINI. 1567.

Title-page of the 1567 English translation of *Exorcismus*
London: Henry Bynneman for William Pickering
The Bodleian Library, Oxford

Anselm I've just heard the most delightful story. You'd swear it was a comic fiction, if I weren't as familiar with the setting, the characters, and the whole affair as I am with you.

Thomas I can't wait to hear it.

5 **Anselm** You know Polus,² Faunus'³ son-in-law, don't you?

Thomas Certainly.

Anselm He's the author of this play as well as an actor in it.

Thomas I'd readily believe it, for even without a mask he could act out any play.

10 **Anselm** So he could. You know too, I suppose, the estate that he has not far from London?⁴

Thomas Why, of course. We've drunk together there many a time.

Anselm Then you know the road lined on each side by trees planted at regular intervals.

15 **Thomas** To the left of the buildings, about two bowshots off.

Anselm Correct. Along one side of the road is a dry ditch grown over with briars and brambles. From the little bridge a path leads to the open field.

Thomas I remember.

Anselm Long ago a rumour spread among the peasants in the neighbourhood
20 that a spectre of some sort had been seen near this little bridge, and its woeful howlings were heard repeatedly. They took it for the soul of someone suffering frightful torments.

Thomas Who started the rumour?

Anselm Polus; who else? He had made it up as a prologue to his play.

25 **Thomas** What put it into his head to invent these things?

Anselm I don't know, except that the man is naturally fond of playing tricks on people's stupidity by inventions of this kind. I'll tell you what he recently contrived in this vein. A large company of us – including some you'd call sober, sensible men – were riding to Richmond.⁵ The sky was marvellously
30 clear, unobscured by the slightest bit of cloud anywhere. Thereupon Polus, staring at the sky, crossed himself with a sweeping gesture and, with a look of blank astonishment, muttered as though to himself, 'Good God, what do I see?' When those who were riding beside him asked him what he saw, he said (crossing himself again even more sweepingly), 'May the most merciful
35 God avert this portent!' While they pressed him, impatient in their curiosity, he kept his eyes fixed on the heavens, and, pointing with his finger to a region of the sky, 'Don't you see,' he said, 'the huge dragon there, armed with fiery horns, its tail twisted into a circle?'⁶ When they insisted they did not see it,⁷ and he had ordered them to look hard and pointed out the place
40 again and again, someone or other, anxious not to seem unobservant, finally declared that he too saw it. One after another followed suit, for they were

ashamed not to see what was so perfectly clear!⁸ Why go on? within three days report of the appearance of such a portent had spread throughout England. But it's wonderful how much the story grew in the telling. There were even persons who in all seriousness expounded the meaning of the wonder. The man who had set the story going thoroughly enjoyed their folly.

Thomas I know his bent. But get back to the apparition.

Anselm Meanwhile Polus found his chance, thanks to Faunus, a parish priest in the vicinity – one of the sort who aren't satisfied with the Latin name of 'regular' unless they're equipped with the same title in Greek.⁹ He looked upon himself as uncommonly wise, especially in divinity.

Thomas I see: an actor for the play was found.

Anselm During dinner, conversation turned to the report about the spectre. When Polus noticed that Faunus not only had heard this story but believed it too, he began to beseech this learned and reverend gentleman to rescue the poor soul who was suffering such terrors. 'And if you have any doubts,' he says, 'investigate the matter. Walk by that little bridge at ten o'clock and you'll hear the wretched wailing. Take with you any companion you like, so as to hear with more safety and certainty.'

Thomas Then what?

Anselm After dinner Polus, according to his custom, went hunting or fowling. Faunus, strolling about when the shadows had already made it impossible to be sure of one's judgment of objects, finally heard the miserable groans. Polus – who's a remarkably clever fellow – was making them from his hiding-place there in the brier patch, with the help of an empty earthenware jar to make his voice sound the more mournful.

Thomas This play, I see, beats Menander's *Spectre*.¹⁰

Anselm You'll go further than that if you hear the whole story. Faunus went back home, eager to relate what he had heard. Polus, taking a short cut, had already arrived. There Faunus tells him what happened, and he even embroiders the tale to make it more impressive.

Thomas Polus could keep from laughing all the while?

Anselm He? Oh, he has perfect control of his expression. You'd have said some serious topic was under discussion. At last, on Polus' earnest entreaty, Faunus undertook the task of exorcism¹¹ and stayed up all that night pondering ways and means of tackling the job safely, since he was terribly frightened on his own account, too. First the most effective exorcisms were collected and some new ones added: 'by the bowels of the Blessed Mary,' 'by the bones of Blessed Winifred.'¹² Next a spot was chosen in the field adjoining the brier patch from which the voice was heard, and a circle, large enough to hold the numerous crucifixes and the various signs, marked off.¹³

All of this was executed with the proper ritual.¹⁴ A large vessel filled with holy water was brought.¹⁵ In addition, a sacred stole (as it's called),¹⁶ with the opening verses of St John's Gospel hanging from it,¹⁷ was hung over Faunus' shoulders. In his pockets he had a waxen image of the kind blessed
 5 annually by the pope and known as an Agnus Dei.¹⁸ Long ago – before a Franciscan cowl became so formidable¹⁹ – people used to protect themselves against harmful demons by this armour.

All this equipment was provided in the event the spirit proved to be an evil one and attacked the exorcist. Still, Faunus didn't dare trust himself to
 10 the circle alone. It was decided that a second priest should be present. Then Polus, afraid that if someone more clever were added the secret of the play would get out, brought a certain parish priest from the neighbourhood. To him he divulged the whole plot, because acting out the play necessitated this, and the priest was one who would enjoy this sort of joke.²⁰ About ten o'clock
 15 the following night, when everything had been duly prepared, Faunus and the parish priest entered the circle. Polus, who has gone on ahead, groans woefully from the brier patch. Faunus commences the exorcism. Meantime Polus sneaks off secretly through the shadows to a cottage nearby, whence he brings another actor for the play; for the performance required a large
 20 cast.

Thomas What do they do?

Anselm Mount black horses and carry concealed fire with them.²¹ When they're near the circle they display the fire, to scare Faunus out of the circle.

Thomas What a lot of trouble Polus took to play a trick!

25 **Anselm** That's the sort of man he is. But his business almost ended in disaster for them.

Thomas How so?

Anselm Because the horses took fright at the fire that was suddenly produced and almost upset both themselves and their riders. There you have
 30 act 1 of the play. When the subject came up for discussion again, Polus, as though ignorant of it all, asks what happened. Faunus then tells of seeing two most dreadful devils²² on black horses, with blazing eyes, and breathing fire from their nostrils.²³ They attempted to enter the circle, he said, but were dispatched to hell by his potent spells. Full of confidence after this, Faunus
 35 returned to the circle next day with all his trappings. When he had called up the spectre, after many long-winded invocations, Polus and his partner again showed themselves from a distance on their black horses, roaring frightfully as if they wanted to break into the circle.²⁴

Thomas Had they no fire?

40 **Anselm** None, for that stratagem hadn't turned out well. But listen to this other device. They brought with them a long rope. Skipping it along the

ground while each rushed hither and yon as though driven by Faunus' exorcisms, they tumbled both priests to the ground, and the jar of holy water as well.

Thomas Did the priest put up with this kind of payment for his acting?

- 5 **Anselm** He did, and preferred to endure this rather than give up his role. After all this, when they talked about the matter again, Faunus proclaimed in Polus' presence what a narrow escape he'd had and how boldly he'd overcome each devil with his spells. And by this time he was absolutely convinced that there was no demon so harmful or brazen that it could break
10 into the circle.

Thomas That Faunus was not far from being a fool.

Anselm You've heard nothing yet. When the play had reached this point, Polus' son-in-law (husband of his eldest daughter) opportunely intervened. He is, as you know, a young man with a wonderful sense of humour.

- 15 **Thomas** I know. He's not averse²⁵ to pranks of this kind.

- Anselm** Averse? He'd jump bail²⁶ set at any sum if a play like this were to be seen or acted. His father-in-law unfolds the whole story and designates him to play the part of the spirit. He dons a costume, and very willingly, too; wraps himself in a linen sheet, as we wrap corpses. In a jug he has a
20 live coal which looks like fire when seen through the linen. At nightfall they go to the scene of the play. Wondrous groans are heard. Faunus sets off all his exorcisms. At last the spirit discloses itself from some distance away in the brier patch, showing the fire repeatedly and sighing woefully. When Faunus conjured it to tell who it was, Polus, dressed like a devil,²⁷ suddenly
25 jumped from the brier patch and roared, 'You have no right to this soul. It's mine!' and rushed to the edge of the circle again and again, as if he were going to attack the exorcist. After a little while he retreated, as though driven back by the words of exorcism and the power of the holy water that Faunus doused him with liberally. At last, after the head devil's departure, Faunus
30 and the spirit begin a conversation. To Faunus' pressing inquiries, the spirit replies that it is the soul of a Christian. Asked its name, it answers 'Faunus.' 'Why, that's my name,' says Faunus. Now, because of their common name, he becomes very eager for Faunus to free Faunus.²⁸

- Though Faunus kept asking about many other matters, the soul
35 withdrew, lest a long-drawn-out conversation give the trick away. He swore he was forbidden to talk any longer, saying that the hour had come when he was forced to go wherever the devil pleased. Nevertheless he promised to return next day at the time permitted.

- Once more there was a reunion at the house of Polus, the director of this
40 play. There the exorcist gave an account of what happened. He garnished the story with some fictions that he was convinced were facts, so much was he

enjoying the affair. Already it was certain that the soul was a Christian one, subjected to dreadful tortures by a merciless devil. Faunus' efforts were directed wholly to this problem. But at the very next exorcism a ridiculous thing occurred.

5 **Thomas** What, I beg you?

Anselm After Faunus had called up the spirit, Polus, who played the devil, rushed forward as if he were going to break into the circle. When Faunus opposed this with exorcisms and sprinkled a lot of holy water on him, the devil finally cried out that he cared not a straw for all that.²⁹ 'You've had
10 dealings with a girl,' he said. 'You're mine by rights.' Polus said this as a joke but evidently chanced to hit upon the truth, for the exorcist, silenced by this utterance, withdrew to the centre of the circle and whispered something or other to the priest.³⁰ Observing this, Polus fell back to avoid overhearing what was unlawful to hear.

15 **Thomas** Clearly Polus behaved like a reverent and modest devil!

Anselm So he did. Otherwise his conduct might have been blamed as lacking in propriety. Still, he did overhear the voice of the priest imposing penance.

Thomas What was it?

20 **Anselm** That Faunus should say the Lord's Prayer three times. From this Polus guessed that he had had relations with the girl three times in the same night.

Thomas That regular broke the regulations, all right.

Anselm They're men, and to err is human.

25 **Thomas** Go on; what happened next?

Anselm Faunus, now sterner than ever, returns to the edge of the circle and willingly calls up the devil. But he, more hesitant now, shrank back, saying, 'You deceived me; had I known, I would not have reminded you.' Many folk are convinced that what you've once confessed to a priest is immediately
30 wiped from the devil's remembrance, so he may not reproach you.³¹

Thomas This story you are telling is really hilarious.

Anselm But – to finish the story at last – conversation with the spirit continued in this manner for some days. The upshot was this: when the exorcist asked whether there was any way of freeing the soul from torment,
35 it replied yes, this could be done if restitution were made of the money it had left – money got by fraud. Thereupon Faunus says, 'What if it were spent by good men for pious purposes?' He answered that this would be satisfactory. Delighted with this, the exorcist inquired very carefully how large the sum was. 'A very big one,' was the reply, which suited Faunus very well. The
40 spirit also informed him of where this treasure was buried (a place far away) and gave explicit directions about the purposes for which it was to be spent.

Thomas What purposes were they?

Anselm It was to enable three men to make pilgrimages.³² One of them was to go to the threshold of Peter; the second was to salute James of Compostella; the third was to kiss the comb of Jesus at Trier.³³ Moreover, a great number of psalms and masses was to be said by some monasteries. The remainder was to be spent as he thought best. By this time Faunus' mind was entirely on the treasure. He had swallowed it whole.³⁴

Thomas It's a common weakness, though priests have a particularly bad reputation in this respect.³⁵

Anselm When nothing remained to be settled concerning money matters, the exorcist, on a hint from Polus, began to ask the spirit about occult arts, alchemy, and magic. And to these questions the soul replied for the time being, but promised to relate much more as soon as the exorcist's labour had freed it from the devil its master. Let this be, if you like, act 3 of the play.³⁶

In act 4, Faunus began to proclaim everywhere, in dead earnest, the prodigious thing that had happened. In conversations and at dinners he prattled of nothing else; he promised splendid gifts to monasteries, and his talk now had not a shred of modesty. He went to the place and found the signs, but still he didn't dare dig up the treasure, because the soul had put an obstacle in his way, namely, that it would be extremely dangerous to touch the treasure before the masses were celebrated. By this time a trick was suspected by many of the shrewder sort. Yet when he never for one moment stopped making a fool of himself everywhere, he was warned confidentially by his friends, especially by his abbot, to beware lest one who had heretofore been considered a man of sound judgment should now give quite another spectacle of himself to the world. But he could not be moved by any plea to take the matter less seriously. So thoroughly did this fancy obsess him that he dreamt of nothing but spectres and evil spirits and talked of nothing else. His mental condition carried over into his very countenance, which became so pale, so drawn, so downcast that you would have said he was a ghost, not a man. What more need I say? He would have been close to real insanity had not relief come through a quick cure.

Thomas This will surely be the final act of the play.³⁷

Anselm I'll tell you about it. Polus and his son-in-law contrived a trick of this sort: they devised a letter written in an unusual script, and not on ordinary paper but the kind goldsmiths coat with gold leaf – reddish-brown, as you know. Its sense was: 'Faunus, long captive now free, to Faunus his most excellent liberator, perpetual greeting. You have no reason, my dear Faunus, to torment yourself further in this affair. God has regarded the righteous intention of your heart and as a reward has freed me from torture. Now I live in bliss with the angels. There is a place awaiting you beside

St Augustine, next to the choir of apostles. When you come to us, I shall thank you in front of them all. Meantime see that you live a happy life. Given from the empyrean heaven on the Ides of September, 1498, under the seal of my ring.³⁸ This letter was placed secretly on the altar where Faunus

5 was to officiate. After this someone was instigated to tip him off about the thing, as though the letter had been discovered by accident. Faunus now carries the letter around and displays it as if it were something sacred, and he believes nothing more firmly than that it was brought from heaven by an angel.

10 **Thomas** This wasn't freeing a man from insanity but changing the brand of insanity.

Anselm Very true, except that now he's mad in a more pleasant way.

Thomas Up to this time I haven't, as a rule, had much faith in popular tales about apparitions, but hereafter I'll have even less. For I suspect there are
15 many pieces of writing circulated as genuine by credulous men like Faunus that were faked by some such trick.

Anselm I, too, believe that very many of them are of this kind.

NOTES

- 1 Proverbial; *Adagia* 1 x 30. Like the opening lines of some other dialogues, these are typical of Lucian's practice, for instance in *Menippus*: a man is asked by a friend who chances to meet him to explain what seems to concern or amuse him so.
- 2 See introduction 531–2 above. Previous editors have failed to notice that Lucian's *Menippus*, which More translated, alludes (16) to a famous actor named Polus (on whom see Gellius 6.5).
- 3 This Faunus is a respectable character, but sometimes in the dialogue the name has unflattering connotations. In Roman religion Faunus was a rustic, satyr-like, at times oracular god, but the resemblance between 'Faunus' and *fatuus* 'fool' is never far from Erasmus' mind (see 538:11 below; in *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1086F the exorcist is said to be *fatuus*). On Faunus as satyr cf Edmund Spenser *Faerie Queene* 2.2.7, 7.6.42.
- 4 Colt lived near Roydon in Essex, but since More's property in Chelsea, which he bought in 1524, was also rural at that time, this allusion to a country place not far from London does not tell us whose estate is meant.
- 5 Borough in Surrey south-west of London, formerly the seat of a royal palace
- 6 A fiery dragon was 'seen' in the sky over Antwerp in September 1515 (*Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris sous le règne de François premier* ed Ludovic Lalanne [Paris 1854] 26). A speaker in 'A Pilgrimage' comments on children's readiness to see dragons and other marvels in the sky (639:20–1). On illusions or chance-images of this kind see H.W. Janson 'The "Image Made by Chance" in Renaissance Thought' in *De artibus opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky* ed Millard Meiss, 2 vols (New York 1961) 1 254–66; E.H. Gombrich *Art and Illusion* 2nd ed

rev (Princeton 1972) chapter 6 'The Image in the Clouds' 182–202. I owe the references to my friend William Heckscher.

- 7 Cf the blindness of Balbinus in 'The Epithalamium' 521:3–522:28.
- 8 For, as a speaker in *De pronuntiatione* remarks, most people are so fond of being deceived that if no one is at hand to fool them, they will fool themselves (LB I 918B / ASD I-4 22:294–5 / CWE 26 378)
- 9 The Augustinian canons regular, the order to which Erasmus belonged. 'Regular' is derived from Latin *regula* 'rule' and 'canon' is a Greek word for 'rule,' so that the canons regular are named twice; a *duplex ordo*, as one of Erasmus' correspondents calls it (Allen Ep 1061: 256–7). Augustinian canons were priests, but not all served parishes. This one does, however.
- 10 Only parts of this play survive. See 'The Poetic Feast' n38.
- 11 The rite of exorcism is different from the exorcism in baptism, on which see 'The Godly Feast' 196:14–15; 'Faith' 424:2–3 and n24; 'The Seraphic Funeral' 1004:15–18. It is the expelling of Satan or other evil spirits, from persons possessed, by means of repeated prayers and adjurations and the use of sacred names, holy water, scriptural passages, and the sign of the cross. The procedure is demanding; no wonder Faunus is apprehensive. The description of what he does is a parody of the rite but would be recognized by informed readers of the colloquy, who were far more familiar with the idea and traditions of exorcism than modern readers can be. See for example 'Rash Vows' n23. A sixteenth-century handbook of instructions for exorcists, the *Aureus tractatus exorcismique pulcherrimi* by Sylvestro Mazzolini Prierias (printed in 1501; I have used a Bologna 1573 edition) discusses the proper procedures for exorcising demons from the living, not the dead, but throws light on Faunus' methods. Mazzolini (d 1523) was a Dominican theologian who became master of the papal palace in 1515. He is remembered for his reply (1518) to Luther's *Ninety-five Theses*, a reply thought by Erasmus to be singularly inept and inadequate (Allen Ep 872:16–21 / CWE Ep 872:18–24; *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1141F). One of the most severe satires on Luther was a clever 'exorcism' *Von dem grossen Lutherischen Narren* (1522) by the Franciscan poet and controversialist Thomas Murner (d 1537); text in *Murners Deutsche Schriften* ed G. Bebermeyer et al, 9 vols (Berlin, Leipzig, Strasbourg 1917–1931) IX ed P. Merker (Strasbourg 1918).
Among brief comments on ghost stories he has heard, Erasmus relates one about an exorcism (Allen Ep 2037:90–118). Another, about witchcraft, includes an exorcism (Allen Ep 2846:124–52); on a witch who was burned see Allen Ep 2880:28–34. An earlier and longer report of abominable sorcery is found in Allen Ep 143:68–185 / CWE Ep 143:74–202. Some of the events described in Benvenuto Cellini's relation of his experience with necromancy in 1533–4 (*Memoirs* trans Thomas Roscoe [rev 1927; repr 1951] chapter 13) will interest readers of Erasmus.
- 12 The exorcist should hold relics of saints in his hand during the rite (Prierias 33, 44). Winifred was a legendary Welsh saint (d c 650) whose abbey at Holywell was long a famous place of pilgrimage.
Erasmus' Spanish detractors objected to these words. No defence is necessary, he replies, since they are uttered by a mere fool, the exorcist (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1086F–1087A). On the oath about Mary see Allen Ep 1956:24–40.

- 13 'Negromancers put theyr trust in theyr cercles wythin whyche they thynke them selfe sure agaynst all the devyls in hell,' who do not dare to step inside it (*More Dialogue Concerning Heresies* 1.3 [Yale CWM 6 part 1 52:30–2]). Nor, according to a popular belief, will they even approach a circle that has a cross in the middle (*Grandes Chroniques de St Denis* [1274], quoted by G.G. Coulton in *A Medieval Garner* [London 1910] 457).
- 14 See Prierias' description 39ff.
- 15 Prierias 8
- 16 Prierias 7, 33, 44, 67
- 17 Prierias 71–2. Because John 1:1–14, proclaiming Christ as the divine Word, was always held in special veneration by Christians, it is not surprising that it should be valued in tests of faith or when souls were imperilled. See D.P. Walker *Unclean Spirits* (Philadelphia 1981) 12, 50, 55. Augustine tells of a Platonist who used to say that John 1:1–5 deserved to be written in letters of gold (*De civitate Dei* 10.29).
- 18 'Lamb of God'; a waxen figure of a lamb, kept or worn as an emblem of Christ. They were blessed by the pope in the first year of his pontificate and every seventh year thereafter.
- 19 See 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 481:23–4, 'The Funeral' 774:27–30 and 'The Seraphic Funeral.'
- 20 And, obviously, not object to a fellow priest's making a fool of himself
- 21 Edward Surtz remarks that More's humour is 'far from buffoonery, horseplay, or boisterous hilarity' ('Richard Pace's Sketch of Thomas More' *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 57 [1958] 43), but there is plenty of horseplay, both literally and figuratively, in 'Exorcism.'
- 22 *cacodaemonēs*; cf 'The Repentant Girl' n7. In Matteo Bandello's *Novelle* (1554) 3.3 a priest disguises himself as a devil and frightens a neighbour so badly that he is able to buy his house cheap (D.P. Rotunda *Motif-Index of the Italian Novella in Prose* [Bloomington, Ind 1942] κ1838).
- 23 The phrase is from Virgil *Georgics* 2.140. Prierias (8) advises the use of sulphur on the mouth and nostrils of the possessed man, so that by 'breathing fire' he may harass the devil.
- 24 In Lucian's *Philopseudes* (32), translated by More, some young men think to scare the philosopher Democritus by dressing like dead men and, confronting him at night, encircle him and dance around him menacingly, but he is unperturbed.
- 25 He's not averse] The first edition reads *sed abhorrens* 'but averse,' which makes no sense; *sed* is corrected to *nec* in later editions.
- 26 A technical phrase; see *Adagia* IV ix 65.
- 27 *ornatu cacodaemonis*; see n22 above.
- 28 Faunus the trickster will 'free' Faunus the fool. See n3 above.
- 29 Literally 'not a hair.' The phrase was proverbial; *Adagia* I viii 4.
- 30 Faunus the exorcist confesses to the second priest that he is guilty of fornication and the priest imposes penance.
- 31 For an illustration of the popular belief that sin confessed to a priest was then forgotten by the devil, see the anecdote in the *Chronicle* of Salimbene (d 1288) translated in G.G. Coulton *From St Francis to Dante* rev ed (London 1907; repr Philadelphia 1972) 320–1. This claim is repeated in Carl Vogl *Begone Satan!* trans Celestine Kapsner (St John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn 1935) 32–3.

- 32 Pilgrimages are treated briefly in 'Rash Vows' and more elaborately in the important later colloquy 'A Pilgrimage.' On Rome see the earlier dialogue. The later one begins with reference to St James and the pilgrimage to Compostella.
- 33 In *Modus orandi Deum* Erasmus says this relic at Trier was associated with Mary as well as Jesus and was believed by the superstitious to cure impetigo (LB v 1120E). He refers in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* to a comb of St Anne, mother of Mary, as a relic (LB vi 118E); he may have seen this or heard of it in Rome. Much more famous among relics at Trier was a piece of cloth reputed to be the seamless coat of Jesus (John 19:23). Legend told that St Helena (d c 330), mother of Constantine, gave it to Trier. It is said to have been shown to the public first in 1512. Luther termed it 'a remarkably masterful fraud . . . a shameful lie' (*Vermahnung an die Geistlichen* [1530] WA 30 part 2 297 3–8 / LW 34 25).
- 34 *toto pectore*; *Adagia* i iv 26
- 35 The next colloquy, 'Alchemy,' provides an example.
- 36 We are not told where acts 1 and 2 of the comedy end but can surmise that act 1 ends at 536:6 and act 2 at 538:11. We know act 3 ends at 540:14 and act 4 at 540:32, act 5 at 541:19.
- 37 *Adagia* i ii 35
- 38 Cf the 'letter' from the Virgin Mary in 'A Pilgrimage' 624:40–628:18 and n14. Letters from deities and the dead (whether in heaven or hell) have a long history. Smith *Key* 28–9 mentions some examples from Erasmus' era.

ALCHEMY

Alcumistica

First printed in the August–September 1524 edition.

Erasmus had referred to alchemy in ‘Exorcism,’ also first printed in August–September 1524, and he turns to the subject again in the present colloquy and ‘Beggar Talk’ in that same edition. Undoubtedly he knew or heard of other swindles of the sort he describes here, though no specific source or occasion is known and none is needed. When commenting on the use of mean or vulgar things for great ends, Erasmus notes sardonically that alchemists, ‘those truly godlike men,’ use mud to conjure up the fifth essence (*Adagia* III vii 1 LB II 877F). He had no more discernible interest in the aspects of alchemy that make it attractive to historians of science or technology than he had in ‘judicial’ astrology (‘The Soldier and the Carthusian’ n14) or medicine. Alchemy as he describes it was a ridiculous quackery, a pretentious imposture, and its victims culpable fools. Folly knows its practitioners well: ‘Led on by sweet hope so that they never grudge labour and expense, they show wonderful ingenuity in always thinking up something whereby to deceive themselves afresh.’ Like Balbinus in this colloquy, ‘they go on enjoying their self-deception until they’ve spent every penny.’ (*Moriae encomium* LB IV 441C–D / ASD IV-3 120:932–41 / CWE 27 113).

This dialogue belongs therefore with other literary treatments of what Chaucer calls ‘that slidyng science’ (*Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale* 732). Erasmus’ ‘Alchemy’ is one of the best, if not indeed the best, contributions to this theme between Chaucer and *The Alchemist* of Ben Jonson, although, oddly enough, few modern writers on alchemy seem familiar with it. Reginald Scot’s *The Discoverie of witchcraft* (1584; STC 21864), written to expose popular delusions, contains a translation of this colloquy (text reprinted in Spurgeon 359–66). ‘By this discourse,’ Scot concludes, ‘Erasmus would give us to note that under the golden name of Alcumystrie there lieth lurking no small calamitie’ (368; in Spurgeon 366).

Erasmus was acquainted with Cornelius Agrippa, one of whose specialties was the occult, which embraced alchemy besides much other lore; on Agrippa see Allen Ep 2544 introduction and CEBR. Another acquaintance was the renowned physician Paracelsus (d 1541), who for a time lived in Basel. He too was credited with expert knowledge of alchemy. A slightly earlier exposition of the state of the art is Thomas Norton’s *Ordinal of Alchemy*, a poem of 3,100 lines (ed John Reidy, EETS 272 [London 1975] with a valuable introduction). The *Ordinal* was written in 1477 but not printed until 1652 in

Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum chemicum Britannicum*. Norton (c 1433–1513) was himself an alchemist. He says he has made the 'elixir of life' (which restores one's youth) and the fifth essence or element (2.905, 907) but, like others of his fraternity, does not reveal precisely how he did it.

For a survey of publications on alchemy in the first half of the sixteenth century consult Thorndike *Magic and Experimental Science* v 532–49. From the vast number of modern writings on alchemy, only a few titles can be cited: Grete de Francesco *The Power of the Charlatan* trans Miriam Beard (New Haven 1939); John Read *The Alchemist in Life, Literature, and Art* (London 1947); F. Sherwood Taylor *The Alchemists* (New York 1949); E.J. Holmyard *Alchemy* (London 1957). Keith Thomas *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London 1971) deals only briefly with alchemy but is an important contribution to intellectual and social history. Wayne Shumaker *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance* (Berkeley 1972) is another excellent study.

PHILECOUS, LALUS¹

Philecous What's happened to amuse Lalus so? He's nearly bursting with laughter and he crosses himself again and again. I'll interrupt the man's bliss. – Greetings, my dear Lalus. You seem very happy.

5

Lalus But I'll be happier if I share this pleasure with you.

Philecous Then do me the favour as soon as you can.²

Lalus You know Balbinus?³

Philecous That learned, much esteemed gentleman?

10

Lalus Just as you say, but no mortal is wise at all times⁴ or perfect in every respect. Along with many brilliant gifts, the gentleman has this slight blemish: that for a long while he's been mad about the art called alchemy.

Philecous What you refer to is not a blemish, surely, but a notorious disease.⁵

15

Lalus However that may be, Balbinus, as often as he's been taken in by this breed of men, nevertheless let himself be duped in an extraordinary manner a little while ago.

Philecous How?

20

Lalus A certain priest came up to him, greeted him respectfully, and then began thus: 'Most learned Balbinus, you wonder perhaps why an ignorant creature like me should interrupt you in this fashion, when I know you never rest a moment from your most sacred studies.' Balbinus nodded, as is his custom, for he's remarkably sparing of words.

Philecous That's proof of shrewdness.

Lalus But the other, who was shrewder, continued: 'You'll forgive this impertinence of mine, however, when you learn my reason for coming to you.' 'Tell it,' says Balbinus, 'but in few words if possible.' 'I'll tell it as briefly as I can,' says he. 'Most learned of men, you know that mortals have different destinies. I'm uncertain whether to include myself among the happy or the unhappy. For if I consider my fate from one standpoint, I think I'm very lucky; but if from another, no one seems less lucky than I.' When Balbinus urged him to cut it short, 'I'll finish, most learned Balbinus,' he says. 'It will be all the easier for me to address a man whose knowledge of this whole business is comparable to none.'

Philecous You're describing a rhetorician to me, not an alchemist.

Lalus You'll hear the alchemist in a moment. 'From boyhood,' he says, 'I've had the good fortune to learn by far the most eagerly sought of all arts, that core of all philosophy, I say – alchemy.' At the word 'alchemy' Balbinus started somewhat – a mere gesture – but uttering a groan, bade him continue. Then says the other, 'But O wretched me! I did not follow the right path.' When Balbinus asked him what paths he was talking about, he replied, 'You know, Excellency – for what escapes you, Balbinus, a man most learned in every respect? – that there is a twofold path in this art: one named longation, the other curtation.⁶ But I had the misfortune to fall into longation.' When Balbinus inquired what the difference was between the two ways, he replied, 'It's presumptuous of me to speak of these matters in your presence when I know that your familiarity with them is unsurpassed. And so I've hurried here to you in hopes that you might take pity on me and deign to share with me that most blessed way of curtation. The more learned you are in this science, the less trouble it will be for you to impart it to me. Do not conceal so great a gift of God from a brother about to die of grief. So may Jesus Christ ever enrich you with greater gifts!'

Since he made no end of entreaties, Balbinus was forced to confess that he simply didn't know what longation or curtation was. He bids the man explain the meaning of these terms. Then says the other, 'Although I know I'm talking to a man of superior learning, nevertheless I'll do as you command. Those who have spent an entire lifetime on this sacred science transmute species of things by two methods. One is shorter but a little more risky; the other takes longer but is safer.⁷ I regard myself as unlucky; up to now I've toiled in this latter path, which does not please me, and I've been unable to find anyone willing to show me the other path that I'm dying to find. At last God put it into my mind to come to you, a man as good as you are learned. Knowledge enables you to grant my request without trouble; goodness will move you to take compassion on a brother whose welfare is in your power.'

T R I A in opere seruanda sunt, primo materia *prepara*, secundo opus continua, ne discontinuatione dissipetur, tertio sis patiens intima natura passim uestigia seruans.

P R A E P A R A primo aquam uitæ summæ purificas tam, & eā serua. Non tamen credas, ut liquor iste, quo cuncta madent, sit Bacchi candens ac limpidus humor. Nam te dum uarijs immensa per auiæ rebus, desines intentum, felices præteris uidas.

P A L A T I V M ingrediēs in quo quindecim sunt mansiones ubi Rex diademate coronatus in excelsa sede sceptrum totius orbis in manu tenens erit: coram cuius maiestate filius cū quinq; famulis uarijs indutus uestibus, flexis genibus regē deprecantur ut tam filio quàm seruis regnum impertiri dignaretur, quorum precibus nil Rex ipse respondit.



At films

A quaint page from *Pretiosa margarita novella*

Aldus Manutius: Venice 1546

This page of the 'New Pearl,' a favourite manual of medieval alchemical lore, shows the king (gold), his son (mercury), and five servants (silver, copper, iron, tin, and lead).

St Andrews University Library

In brief, after the sly old rascal, by this kind of talk, had dispelled suspicion of fraud and had convinced Balbinus of his perfect understanding of the other way, Balbinus was already itching with impatience. Finally, unable to restrain himself, he says, 'Away with that curttation! I've never
 5 even heard of it, let alone mastered it. Tell me straight: do you understand longation well?' 'Pooh!' says the other, 'To a T.⁸ But the length I don't care for.' When Balbinus asked him how much time it took, he replied, 'Too much – almost a whole year. It's the safest way, though.'⁹ 'Don't worry even if the job takes two years,' says Balbinus, 'provided you're sure of your skill.' To
 10 make a long story short, they reach an agreement to undertake the business secretly in Balbinus' house on condition that the priest should do the work and Balbinus put up the money. The profit was to be divided half and half, although the swindler – modest fellow that he was! – voluntarily assigned all anticipated profit to Balbinus. And each swears an oath of secrecy, like
 15 persons initiated into secret rites. Money is counted out then and there for the operator to buy pots, glasses, charcoal, and other equipment needed for the laboratory. This money our alchemist squanders¹⁰ enjoyably on whores, dice, and drink.

Philecous That's changing the species of things, all right!¹¹

20 **Lalus** To Balbinus' urging that he get to work, he replied, 'Don't you agree with the saying that "well begun is half done?"¹² It's a big job to prepare the apparatus properly.' At last he began fitting up the furnace. Here again more gold was needed: a lure to catch later gold, as it were. As a fish isn't landed without bait, so an alchemist produces no gold unless he has some to
 25 begin with.

Meanwhile Balbinus devoted all his time to calculations. He was figuring how much profit, if one ounce yielded fifteen, would be made from two thousand ounces – for so much had he determined to invest.¹³ After the alchemist had run through this money, too, and already had pretended for a
 30 month or so to be busy with bellows and charcoal, Balbinus asked him how the work was coming along. At first he was silent. Finally, when Balbinus pressed him, he answered, 'Just as important projects generally come along – they're always hard to get under way.'¹⁴ He gave as the reason a mistake in buying charcoal: he had bought some made from oak when fir or hazel was
 35 required.¹⁵ There went a hundred gold crowns – and the dice went rolling just as promptly.

With a new grant of money the charcoal was replaced. Now the work was started more earnestly than before: as, in a war, if soldiers suffer a setback, they make up for it by valour. When the laboratory had glowed for
 40 some months now, and the golden fruit was expected, and not even a speck of gold was in the vessels (for by this time the alchemist had squandered all

that too), another excuse was alleged: the glasses used had not been heated properly. For as a likeness of Mercury isn't fashioned from just any kind of wood,¹⁶ so gold isn't made in just any kind of glasses. The greater the investment, the slighter the inclination to desist.

5 **Philecous** That's just like gamblers. As if it weren't much better to cut your losses than to lose everything!¹⁷

Lalus Exactly. The alchemist swore he'd never been so cheated. Now that the error was corrected, the rest would be quite safe and this loss made good, with a large amount of interest besides.

10 After the glasses were changed, the laboratory was set up for the third time. The alchemist suggested that their business would succeed better if he sent some gold crowns as an offering to the Virgin Mother who, as you know, is venerated at Paralia.¹⁸ For the art is a sacred one and cannot prosper without the blessing of heaven.¹⁹ This advice was most acceptable
15 to Balbinus, since he was a devout man who would not let a day go by without celebrating mass.²⁰ The alchemist set out on his pilgrimage – to the next village, that is – and there spent the votive money in riotous living. Home again, he announces he has the highest hopes that their enterprise will prosper in accordance with their wishes, so pleased²¹ did the Holy Virgin
20 seem with his offering.

When, after much time and toil, not a single grain of gold had been produced, the alchemist, in reply to Balbinus' complaint, swore he had never had such an experience in his life, expert thought he was in this art: he couldn't guess what the trouble was. Finally, after much pondering, it
25 occurred to Balbinus to wonder if the alchemist had missed hearing divine service on any day, or failed to say his office,²² as they call it; for if these are neglected nothing succeeds. Thereupon the swindler replies, 'You've hit the nail on the head.²³ Wretched me! I did forget to do that once or twice, and lately I forgot to salute the Virgin on rising from a long-drawn-out dinner
30 party.' 'No wonder,' says Balbinus then, 'that so important a matter doesn't succeed.' The expert undertook to hear twelve masses for the two he had missed, and in place of a single salutation to make ten.

When the spendthrift alchemist had gone broke time after time, and no excuses for asking for money presented themselves, he finally thought
35 up this trick. He arrived home out of breath and moaned, 'I'm done for, Balbinus, done for;²⁴ I'll swing for this!' Balbinus, amazed, was impatient to learn the cause of so great a disaster. 'Some officials at court got word of what we're up to,' he says, 'and I fully expect to be dragged off to jail any minute.' At this speech Balbinus turned pale in earnest, for you know
40 that to practise alchemy without royal permission is a capital crime in these parts. 'I'm not afraid of death,' continues the other; 'I only hope that's what I

get. I'm afraid of something more cruel.' To the question of what this was, he answers, 'That I'll be carried off to a tower somewhere and forced to slave there all my life for persons against my will. Is there any death not preferable to such a life?'²⁵

- 5 Then and there they examined the matter from every angle. Balbinus, since he was a master of rhetoric, hammered away at every basis,²⁶ seeking an escape from the danger. 'Can't you deny the crime?' he says. 'By no means,' is the answer. 'The affair is common knowledge among the courtiers, and they have evidence that can't be brushed aside.' So plain was the law that
10 they could put up no defence. After many possibilities had been weighed and nothing reassuring appeared, the alchemist, who was now sorely in need of cash, finally said, 'Balbinus, we are wasting our time in long-drawn-out discussions, but the problem demands an immediate solution. I think they're coming very soon to arrest me.' In the end, when Balbinus could think of
15 nothing by way of reply, the alchemist said, 'I can't think of anything either, nor do I see anything left to do except die bravely. Unless, perhaps, this one remaining possibility appeals to you. It's a useful rather than an honourable one, except that necessity is a cruel goad. You know,' says he, 'that men of this sort are greedy of money, and therefore it's rather easy to bribe them to
20 keep their mouths shut. However hard it may be to give those rascals money to throw away, still, as things now stand, I see no better remedy.' Balbinus agreed and counted out thirty gold crowns to stop their tongues.

Philecous That's wonderful generosity on Balbinus' part.

- Lalus** Oh, no; in any honest business you would sooner have drawn a tooth
25 from him than a farthing. Thus the alchemist was provided for. He was in no danger except that of having no money to give to his mistress.

Philecous I'm surprised Balbinus is gullible to such an extent.

- Lalus** Only in this matter is he gullible. In others he's very sharp. With fresh funds the furnace was set up once more,²⁷ but first brief prayers were made
30 to the Virgin Mother to win her favour for the undertaking. Already a whole year had passed, while the alchemist made up one excuse after another; the labour was lost and the investment wasted. Meantime an absurd accident occurred.

Philecous What was it?

- 35 **Lalus** The alchemist was having a secret affair with the wife of a courtier. Her husband, his suspicions aroused, began to keep an eye on the man. At last, when word reached him that the priest was in the bedroom, he returned home unexpectedly and pounded on the door.

Philecous What was he going to do to the fellow?

- 40 **Lalus** What? Nothing pleasant – either kill him or castrate him. When the husband, insistent, threatened to break down the door if his wife didn't

open it, a great commotion resulted. Some instant remedy was sought. There was none but that offered by the situation itself. Throwing his tunic aside, the priest lowered himself through a narrow window – not without risk or injury – and fled. Such stories get around quickly, you know. So the word

5 reached Balbinus too, as the alchemist foresaw it would.

Philecous And thus he's caught in the middle.²⁸

Lalus On the contrary, he got out of this more luckily than from the bedroom. Mark the fellow's trick. Balbinus did not protest, but he showed well enough by his sombre expression that he was not unaware of the gossip.

10 The alchemist knew that Balbinus was strait-laced – I might almost say superstitious – in some things. Such men readily forgive one who asks pardon, no matter how serious the fault.²⁹ So the other purposely brings up the subject of how their business is going, complaining that he's not getting along as well as usual or as he would like and adding emphatically that

15 he wonders what the reason is. Balbinus, who otherwise seemed resolved upon silence, was aroused at once by this opportunity; and he was a man easily aroused. 'There's no mystery about what the trouble is,' he says. 'Your sins block the success of what should be handled by pure men in a pure way.'³⁰ At this word the alchemist dropped to his knees, beating his breast

20 repeatedly, and with tearful looks and tone said, 'Balbinus, you've spoken the absolute truth. Sins – sins, I admit, are the hindrance. But they're my sins, not yours, for I shan't be ashamed to confess my disgrace before you, as before the holiest priest. Weakness of the flesh overcame me; Satan drew me into his snares, and – O wretched me! – from priest I am become an

25 adulterer. Yet the offering we made to the Virgin Mother was not altogether wasted. I would certainly have been killed if she had not come to my rescue. The husband was breaking down the door; the window was too narrow for me to slip through. In so imminent a danger I thought of the Most Holy Virgin. I fell on my knees and implored her, if the gift had been acceptable, to

30 help me. Without further delay I tried the window again – my plight forced me to do so – and found it was wide enough for my escape.'

Philecous Balbinus believed this?

Lalus Believed it? More than that, he forgave him and solemnly warned him not to show himself ungrateful to the Most Blessed Virgin. Once more

35 money was counted out to the alchemist, who promised that hereafter he would conduct this holy enterprise in purity of life.

Philecous How did it end?

Lalus It's a long story, but I'll finish it in few words. After he had made a fool of the man for quite a while by tricks of this sort, and fleeced him of

40 no mean sum of money, the affair finally came to the ears of one who had known the rascal from boyhood. Readily surmising the fellow was doing the

same thing in Balbinus' house that he had done everywhere else, he visits Balbinus secretly, explains what kind of 'expert' he shelters in his house, and warns him to get rid of the man as quickly as possible unless he wants his guest to make good his own escape after pillaging the contents of his desk.

5 **Philecous** What did Balbinus do at this? Had him thrown into jail, surely?

Lalus Jail? Oh, no: he gave him travel money, imploring him by everything sacred not to blab about what had happened. And in my opinion he was wise to prefer this to having the story become the talk of the town, and, in the second place, to risking confiscation of his property. The impostor was in
10 no danger. He understood the 'art' about as well as an ass does,³¹ and in an affair of this kind swindling is regarded leniently. Besides, if charged with theft, benefit of clergy would have saved him from hanging. Nor would anyone willingly be at the expense of keeping him in jail.

Philecous I might feel sorry for Balbinus if he himself didn't enjoy being
15 gulled.³²

Lalus I must hurry to court now. Some other time I'll tell you far more foolish tales.

Philecous I'll be glad to hear them when I have time, and I'll match you story for story.

NOTES

1 Philecous means 'fond of hearing.' It is the name of one of the characters in 'The Seraphic Funeral.' Lalus means 'talkative.'

2 A Lucianic opening; see 'Exorcism' n1.

3 The name is borrowed from Horace *Satires* 1.3.40, whose Balbinus is blind to the defects of his mistress; cf *Adagia* I ii 15. Another impercipient Balbinus is met in 'The Epithalamium.' Both are simple souls, easily taken in. In this colloquy Balbinus is a churchman, perhaps a prior or canon. In Chaucer's *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* a canon deceives a priest. Here the roles are reversed, for Balbinus is a person of some dignity and repute, a scholarly divine duped by a clever rogue of a priest.

4 *Adagia* II iv 29

5 The pursuit of many kinds of knowledge is meritorious in clerics, but dabbling in magic or alchemy is sinful (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 853F-854A).

6 In the original *longatio* and *curtatio*. Both words are extremely rare. Erasmus must have remembered the verb *elongo* from Psalm 72:27 Vulg (*elongant*). The *Thesaurus linguae Latinae* (Leipzig 1900-) cites *elongatione* from Arnobius the Younger (fifth century) *Praedestinatus* 3.9 (PL 53 647D), and *decurtatio* occurs in C. Marius Victorinus (fourth century) *Ars grammatica*; see *Grammatici Latini* ed H. Keil, 8 vols (Leipzig 1857-80; repr Hildesheim 1961) VI 67:25. It is also in Pacian (fourth century) *De similitudine carnis peccati*; see Alexander Souter *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D.* (Oxford 1949). Erasmus uses the infinitive *decurtare* in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 632B. *Longatio* is recorded

in *Novum glossarium mediae Latinitatis* ed Franz Blatt (Copenhagen 1957–) from PL 172 92, that is, from the *Philosophia mundi*, which has been attributed to Bede, to Honorius Augustodunensis, and to William of Conches. Neither *longatio* nor *curtatio* is in C. DuCange *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae Latinitatis* 6 vols (Paris 1733–6), nor were they ever alchemical terms, so far as can be determined, until Erasmus made them so. They do not appear in alchemical vocabularies such as Thomas Norton's *Ordinal of Alchemy* (1477; see introduction 545–6 above) or Martinus Rulandus' *Lexicon alchemiae* (Frankfort 1612). Erasmus evidently fashioned them from *longo* or *elongo* and *curto* or like forms for his rhetorical purpose of enabling the wily priest to impress Balbinus with them, and Balbinus swallows the bait. English 'longation' and 'curtation' occur first as alchemical terms in Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of witchcraft* (introduction 545 above), but Scot merely Englished the words he read in Erasmus' colloquy. Thus Erasmus can be said to have contributed them to the jargon of alchemy, in fiction at any rate, and through Scot's use of them in his translation, to English – another example of Erasmus' own lexical alchemy.

- 7 Clearly 'longation' and 'curtation' correspond to the *voie humide* and *voie sèche* mentioned by Serge Hutin *La vie quotidienne des alchimistes au moyen âge* (Paris 1977) 69–70. The short or dry way took seven or eight days but was dangerous because of the risk of explosion; the long or humid way required forty days. Balbinus, as covetous as he is gullible, is easily persuaded that 'longation' takes far longer than forty days.
- 8 *ad unguem*. Proverbial; *Adagia* I v 91
- 9 Alchemy takes time, and the need for patience is always emphasized, as in Norton *Ordinal of Alchemy* 1.321–2: 'With grete pacience thei do procede, / Trustyng only in god to be their spede.'
- 10 *decoquit*, 'boil down,' but also 'consume,' 'waste,' or 'squander'
- 11 Another double meaning. On one level the words refer to transmuting base metals into gold by alchemy; on another they can refer obliquely to Eucharistic species: the 'accidents' of bread and wine that remain after their substance is converted into the body and blood of Christ.
- 12 Horace *Epistles* 1.2.40
- 13 If one ounce of good gold alloy were transmuted into fifteen ounces of pure gold, how much profit could be expected from investing two thousand ounces? As usual, the victim's greed matches the rapacity of the trickster.
- 14 Cf *Adagia* II i 12.
- 15 The fire must be of exactly the right wood, which in Chaucer's *Canon's Yeoman's Tale* is beech (928–9), as in Jonson's *Alchemist* (1.3.102). Here our alchemist specifies fir or hazel, an answer good enough for the 'learned' Balbinus.
- 16 *Adagia* II v 47. Not everyone has aptitude for learning. Mercury, as the god of magic and ingenuity, must be served, and used, in just the right way.
- 17 Knowles writes of a Cistercian monk in the early Tudor period who claimed to be a successful alchemist. But to continue, as he informed his abbot, he needed additional apparatus; and meanwhile, like Erasmus' priest, he needed ready cash to tide him over (ROE III 32). For a story of a greedy prior who lavished so much money on an alchemist, a friar, that he nearly exhausted his monastery's resources, see G.G. Coulton *Life in the Middle Ages* 4 vols (Cambridge 1928–30) III 95–8.

- 18 In the text *Paraliis*. As Erasmus' seventeenth-century editor and annotator Petrus Rabus (Rotterdam 1693) pointed out, the name is made of two Greek words and means 'by the sea.' The allusion is to the shrine of the Virgin of Walsingham in Norfolk. Erasmus' visit there is related in 'A Pilgrimage.' In that colloquy a comparable epithet for 'by the sea,' from Greek, is used.
- 19 As Norton comments (*Ordinal of Alchemy* 1.183-6):

A wonderful science, secrete philosophie,
A singuler grace & gyfte of almyghtie,
which neuir was fownde bi labour of man,
But it bi teching or reuelacion bigan.
- 20 Erasmus' memoir of Colet notes that although English priests usually celebrated mass every day, Colet celebrated only occasionally, either because his sacred studies, by which he prepared himself for preaching, prevented, or because (Erasmus suggests) he found that if he celebrated only from time to time he did so with greater feeling (Allen Ep 1211:491-8 / CWE Ep 1211:535-42).
- 21 The same word, *annuere* 'to nod approval,' is used of Barbara in 'Military Affairs' (58:15) and of St James and of Mary in 'A Pilgrimage'; see n10 there.
- 22 *preces horarias*, the divine office, obligatory prayers a priest must recite (or, if a monk, sing in choir) daily; the breviary
- 23 *Adagia* II iv 93
- 24 *perii funditus*; Horace *Odes* 1.16.20. Cf *Adagia* IV viii 22.
- 25 The alchemist's breathless announcement of possible imprisonment, and his allusion to alchemy as a capital offence, have the desired effect on Balbinus. Some canonists thought alchemical experiments might be tolerable if, for example, their purpose was to advance medical knowledge. The general opinion among canonists appears to have been that alchemy was illicit, generally risky or suspect, and at best unseemly for priests or religious to dabble in; if misused, deserving of excommunication, imprisonment, or other appropriate punishment. Civil government would have been ruthless if alchemists had ever succeeded in turning other metals into gold and silver, for coinage was the exclusive privilege of the state, and counterfeiters could expect no mercy. For a summary of earlier canonists' judgments on alchemy and coinage see Lucius Ferraris *Prompta biblioteca canonica* . . . (Paris 1858) I 357-62, v 947ff. Allusion to a fate worse than death calls to mind the same fear of Jonson's alchemist (4.7.79-82), that

. . . if the house
Should chance to be suspected, all would out,
And we be lock'd up in the Tower, for ever,
To make gold there (for th' state), never come out.

The note on these lines in F.H. Mares' edition (Cambridge, Mass 1967) 162 names two alchemists who were imprisoned in the Tower of London, one by Edward II, the other by Elizabeth I.

A treatise *De auro*, published in 1586 as the work of Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (d 1533), referring to lines 550:39-41 of Erasmus' colloquy, expresses surprise that Erasmus, in his satire of alchemy - if indeed he was serious about this - had not taken the trouble to be better informed about the writings of the Arabs on the art, and asks who are these kings who have made

alchemy without royal permission a capital crime (the passages are quoted by F. Secret 'Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, Lilio Gregorio Giraldi et l'alchimie' BHR 38 [1976] 99–100). Charles B. Schmitt judges that *De auro* is 'of doubtful authenticity' (*Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1469–1533) and His Critique of Aristotle* [The Hague 1967] 193).

- 26 *status*, a technical term for the ground of an argument; cf *De copia* CWE 24 605:3. See Quintilian 3.6 and 'A Fish Diet' n220.
- 27 It is characteristic of alchemists, Erasmus says in *Moriae encomium*, that they run through all their money until there is not enough left to build a new furnace (LB IV 441C–D / ASD IV-3 120:932–7 / CWE 27 113).
- 28 *medius tenetur*, a figure from wrestling; *Adagia* I iv 96
- 29 That is, if the offender shows sufficient remorse
- 30 Cf *Adagia* III ii 85. The alchemist must be 'A pious, holy and religious man, / One free from mortal sin, a very virgin' (*The Alchemist* 2.2.98–9).
- 31 After this sentence Reginald Scot omits the remainder of the dialogue, substituting some moralizing lines of his own.
- 32 As Erasmus insists is the nature of fools. See 'Exorcism' n8.

THE CHEATING HORSE-DEALER

Hippoplanus

First printed in the August–September 1524 edition.

‘Coursers of horses, by false means, make them look fast and fat’ (William Horman *Vulgaria* [1519] ed M.R. James for the Roxburghe Club [Oxford 1926] 251). If the millennium ever comes, wrote George Gascoigne (1576), one signal of it will be ‘When horse corsers, beguile no friends with Jades’ (*The Steele Glas* 1084). Today we have only to substitute automobile renters or used-car dealers for horse-dealers to see that, *mutatis mutandis*, this anecdote by Erasmus is yet another example of the timeliness of many stories in the *Colloquies*. The satisfaction of finding a trickster tricked is one of the constants of fiction. Like anyone who read widely and had a keen eye for the foibles of men and women, Erasmus knew from observation and his own experiences the ways of tradesmen, merchants, sailors, innkeepers, carters, servants, even customs officers. He knew buyers and sellers and had a shrewd head for money; his letters to and from his banker Erasmus Schets are more numerous than those of any other correspondent except Bonifacius Amerbach.

The occasion for this yarn may have a connection with an argument about a horse mentioned vaguely in a letter of June 1523 (Ep 1371) from Erasmus to Heinrich Eppendorf, a young Saxon of his acquaintance. We know nothing specific about the incident but do know that at that time Erasmus and Eppendorf were on speaking terms. Later, as a consequence of the quarrel between Erasmus and Ulrich von Hutten, in which Eppendorf sided with Hutten, Eppendorf and Erasmus became bitter enemies. In 1529 Erasmus settled some old scores by printing a colloquy ridiculing Eppendorf’s pretensions to social status. The titles of that colloquy ‘ἵππεὺς ἀνίππος [*hippeus anippos*] ‘The Knight without a Horse,’ and of the present one, *Hippoplanus* (ἵππος [*hippos*] ‘horse’ + *planus* ‘cheat’), along with Erasmus’ reference to Eppendorf in September 1524 as *Plandorpius* ‘from Planodorp’ (Allen Ep 1496:110 / CWE Ep 1496:122), indicate that Eppendorf may have been the original horse-dealer here, as Smith surmised (*Key* 35–6). On Eppendorf see further Allen Ep 1122 introduction, CWE Ep 1283 n4, Ep 1437, CEBR, and the notes to ‘The Knight without a Horse.’

For a long account of some troubles Erasmus once had with a horse-dealer see Ep 119.

AULUS, PHAEDRUS

- Aulus** Immortal God,¹ how solemn-looking our Phaedruss is! And he lifts his eyes to heaven repeatedly. I'll go up and speak to him. – What's new, Phaedruss?
- Phaedruss** Why do you ask that, Aulus?
- Aulus** Because you seem to have changed from Phaedruss to Cato, so stern do you look.²
- Phaedruss** No wonder, my friend; I've just confessed my sins.
- Aulus** Oh, then I'm no longer surprised. But tell me, have you sincerely confessed them all?
- Phaedruss** All I could think of – with one exception only.
- Aulus** Why did you keep quiet about that one?
- Phaedruss** Because so far I haven't been able to repent it.
- Aulus** Must be a pleasant sin!
- Phaedruss** Whether it's a sin I don't know; but if you've time you shall hear about it.
- Aulus** I'd be very glad to hear.
- Phaedruss** You know how much cheating there is among horse-dealers in this neighbourhood.
- Aulus** I know better than I could wish; I've been taken in by them more than once.
- Phaedruss** Recently I had a journey to make, a rather long and urgent one. I go to one of these fellows – the best of a bad lot, you'd say; we were to some degree personal friends, too. My business is pressing, I tell him; I need a good, strong horse; if ever he had good will towards me, now was the time to prove it. He promised to treat me as he would his favourite brother.
- Aulus** Maybe he'd cheat his brother, too.
- Phaedruss** He leads me to the stable and tells me to take my pick of all the horses there. Finally I make my choice. He endorses my judgment, swearing this horse is often asked for by many customers. He preferred to keep it for a special friend rather than let it go to strangers. We agree on a price, the money's paid at once, and I mount. The horse began to prance with wonderful briskness when I rode off; you'd have called it spirited, for it was a little plump and quite a fine-looking horse.³ After riding an hour and a half I noticed it was played out – couldn't be hurried even by spurs. I'd heard such were kept by dealers for cheating people: they look remarkably good to you, but they refuse to work. I think to myself, 'I've been taken in. Well, I'll give tit for tat⁴ when I get home.'
- Aulus** What plan did you devise, being a horseman without a horse?⁵

Phaedrus What the circumstances permitted. I turned aside to the next village, where I left my horse secretly with an acquaintance and hired another one. I made my journey and came back. I return the hired horse; I find my false jade⁶ fat and well rested, as he was when I left him. This horse
 5 I ride back to the cheat. I ask him to board it in his stable for some days until I need it again. He asks if I had a comfortable ride. I swear on my part by all that's holy that never in my life had I mounted a better horse, that it flew rather than walked, that it had never tired on so long a journey and was not the least bit⁷ leaner from the effort. When I had convinced him this was the
 10 truth, he reflected in silence that that horse was not what he had suspected up to now. And so before I went away he asked whether I'd sell it. At first I said no, that if I had to make the journey again I wouldn't easily find another horse like that one. Still, nothing was so precious to me that it wasn't for sale at a high price, even – I said – if someone wanted to buy me myself.

15 **Aulus** Good! You beat a Cretan at his own game.⁸
Phaedrus The rest is quickly told. He won't let me off until I set a price on the horse. I name one a good deal higher than I had paid. Leaving him, I immediately enlist a man, well briefed and instructed, to play a supporting role in this comedy.⁹ He goes to the liveryman's home, summons him, and
 20 says he needs a first-rate horse, one that can stand an exceptional amount of work. The other man shows him many, praising the worst most of all. Only the one he had sold to me does he refrain from praising, since he believed it was really the kind of horse I said it was. But the other fellow asks then and there whether that one too is for sale (for I had described the horse's looks
 25 to him and pointed out the place where it was kept). At first the liveryman was silent and talked up the others zealously. When this chap would discuss only that one horse, no matter how highly recommended the others were, the liveryman finally thought to himself, 'Clearly I've misjudged that horse, since this stranger at once picked it out from all the others.' At last, when the
 30 stranger kept pressing him, he says, 'He's for sale, but you may be scared off by the price.' 'The price isn't high if one gets good value,' replies the other. 'Name it.' He named one somewhat higher than I had charged him – on the lookout for a profit here, too. Finally they agree on a price and a satisfactory down payment is made – a gold crown, to be exact – to avoid any suspicion
 35 of feigned purchase.¹⁰ The buyer orders the horse to be fed, says he'll come back and get it soon, and even gives the groom a tip.

The instant I learned the deal was closed so tight it couldn't be broken, I went back to the liveryman, booted and spurred. Breathlessly I call for him. He's on hand and asks what I want. 'Have my horse saddled right away,' I
 40 tell him; 'I must be off at once– it's urgent.' 'But,' says he, 'you just ordered

- me to board your horse for several days.' 'True,' I reply, 'but the business came up unexpectedly, and it's an official errand that won't wait.' 'Take any one you like,' he says, 'but you can't have yours.' 'Why?' I ask. 'Because it's been sold.' Thereupon I pretend to be greatly upset. 'God forbid what you say!' I tell him. 'With this journey before me I wouldn't sell that horse even if paid four times the price.' I start to rail at him; I protest I'm ruined. In the end he grew angry and said, 'Why all the argument? You set a price on the horse; I've sold it. If I pay you the price, you've no complaint against me. We have laws in this city. You can't force me to produce the horse.'
- 5 After I insisted for a long time that he produce either the horse or the buyer, he finally – in a rage – counts out the money. I had bought it for fifteen gold crowns and set a price of twenty-six on it. He priced it at thirty-two.¹¹ He thought to himself, 'Better to make this much profit than give back the horse!' I take my leave, pretending to be disappointed and hardly appeased
- 10 even by payment of the money. He asks for my good will and says that in other matters he'll make up for this inconvenience.

So I cheated the cheater. He has a worthless horse; he's waiting for the man who made the down payment to come and settle in full. But nobody comes or will ever come.

- 20 **Aulus** Has he never complained to you meantime?
Phaedrus On what ground or with what right could he do this? A bargain was struck twice. It's the buyer's good faith he's complained of. But I spoke up and reproached the man, telling him he deserved his hard luck for depriving me of such a horse for the sake of a quick sale.
- 25 This is a sin so well arranged, in my judgment, that I can't bring myself to confess it.
- Aulus** If I'd thought up anything like that, I'd be so far from intending to confess it that I'd demand a statue to myself.
- Phaedrus** I don't know if you're serious, but you encourage me to enjoy all
- 30 the more playing a trick¹² on such fellows.

NOTES

- 1 Terence *Adelphi* 447, *Phormio* 353; see 'The Epithalamium' n2. 'How solemn-looking' is Greek in the original. Lines 3–6 are a common way of introducing dialogue; see 'Exorcism' n1.
- 2 Phaedrus means 'bright,' 'cheerful' in Greek. Cato the Censor (234–149 BC) was famous for frugality, earnestness, and simplicity. Aulus is the name of the inquisitor in 'Faith.'
- 3 Diminutives, *obesulus* and *pulchellus*. Erasmus' fondness for such forms is characteristic of his writing.
- 4 *par pari*; *Adagia* I i 35

- 5 *eques absque equo*, a phrase that anticipates the title of Erasmus' March 1529 colloquy on Eppendorf.
- 6 *meam sophistam*; because plausible at first but later proved false, like a sophist in argument
- 7 Literally 'not by a hair.' The phrase was proverbial; *Adagia* I viii 4.
- 8 By overcoming him with his own weapons. A common proverb; *Adagia* I ii 26 and 29. Cretans were notorious for lying and stealing. 'The Cretans are always liars,' according to a Greek verse quoted by St Paul (Titus 1:12) and attributed to Epimenides. It is quoted later by Callimachus *Hymns* 1.8 and often used by Erasmus.
- 9 As the second priest does in 'Exorcism'
- 10 *simulatae emptionis*, a legal phrase; Cicero *In Verrem actio secunda* 4.60.134, and cf Plautus *Epidicus* 373.
- 11 For the man to whom he believes he has just sold the horse
- 12 *facere fucum*. See *Adagia* I v 52.

BEGGAR TALK

Πτωχολογία

First printed in the August–September 1524 edition.

Alchemy and other brands of quackery, though embarrassing and expensive nuisances to their victims and a convenient theme for satirists, were scarcely major social evils. Far different was the ugly problem of begging. Only in the last dozen lines or so of the dialogue does this topic receive serious attention, but Erasmus, like other social critics, was well aware of its urgency. To give alms was a Christian duty, but to know that and to preach it was not enough. In his *A Supplication for the Beggars* (1529; STC 10883), addressed to Henry VIII, Simon Fish told the king that the vagabonds and beggars in his kingdom suffered from ‘ravinous wolves’ going about in sheep’s clothing and devouring the flock. These wolves were the bishops and other clergy, high and low; they own, he says, ‘the therd part of all youre Realme.’ Exaggeration and stridency notwithstanding, this bitter anticlerical document may have had some effect, especially if the story is true that the king read it and carried it about with him for several days.

Many mendicants belonged to religious orders. Many others, probably the majority, were the vagabonds or homeless and diseased wretches encountered so commonly in the secular literature of the age and in its pictorial art. The problem of poverty and mendicancy in Europe was related directly to the extinction of serfdom and the steady growth of a wage economy, especially in north-western Europe after the introduction of woollen manufacture and the attendant growth of the towns. With a dramatic depletion of the labour supply after the Black Death the condition of free labourers improved, but the loss of manorial lordship brought with it also new conditions of insecurity. In the towns, guilds and confraternities provided almshouses and other forms of relief, but the church, through parishes, monasteries, and convents, was the chief source of aid to the indigent. Advocacy of works of charity and the implications of the doctrine of purgatory kept up pressure on the well-off to endow such efforts.

In Erasmus’ lifetime the forces working to separate the labourer from the land, including those of a general economic depression and of the enclosure movement, produced widespread poverty and unemployment. The humanist community was quick to respond to the issues of justice and social tension. In England, Sir Thomas More’s savage assault on enclosures and his vivid depiction of the hardships of the dispossessed in book 1 of *Utopia* is perhaps the best remembered attack (Yale CWM 4 65–71). The increase

in the number of beggars was a cause of concern on the continent as well. Everywhere, existing institutions were unable to cope with the mounting need. The Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives, the associate of both More and Erasmus, produced about 1526 an original and constructive plan for poor relief in his *De subventionem pauperum* (*Opera omnia* iv 420–94; summary and partial translation in *Some Early Tracts on Poor Relief* ed F.R. Salter [London 1926] 1–31). This was addressed to the town council of Bruges, and advocated measures (the registration of the poor, investigation of individual circumstances, public works to provide employment) which are the sort of principles mentioned by Misoponus at the end of this colloquy: every able-bodied person should be forced to work, following the Pauline principle that ‘if any would not work, neither should he eat’ (2 Thess 3:10). Poverty was to be treated as a social, and therefore political, problem by each community. A civic committee appointed to supervise poor relief would take a census of the indigent; vagrants would be given travel money and turned out of town. Vives warned against tolerating idlers and fakers. In this last respect he was reiterating attitudes already in vogue in the later fifteenth century: the need to discriminate between idlers (the ‘sturdy beggars’ of English lore) and the ‘real’ poor, insistence on work, and resort to local government, principles often attributed to the sixteenth century but all developed before 1500.

The secularization of charity proceeded apace. By 1516, the date of *Utopia*, some cities in the Netherlands had already taken over poor relief; Nürnberg and Strasbourg did the same in 1522 and 1523; in 1536 a plan similar to that of Vives was adopted in Ypres. Protestant reformers added their own urging. No Christian should have to beg, wrote Luther in 1520; begging could be abolished if there were a law requiring every town or city to provide for its own poor from the common treasury and to expel all others (*An den christlichen Adel* WA 6 450:22–451:6 / LW 44 189–90). In the Zürich of Huldrych Zwingli, a similar plan emerged in the Poor Law of January 1525; see A. Rich ‘Zwingli als sozialpolitischer Denker’ *Zwingliana: Beiträge zur Geschichte Zwinglis, der Reformation und der Protestantismus in der Schweiz* 13 (Zürich 1969) 67–89.

The warning in the final lines of Erasmus’ ‘Beggar Talk,’ which antedated Vives’ tract by two years, proved correct. Early Protestants, Luther above all, used to get more credit for the secularization of poor relief than they may have deserved. It is argued that ‘secularization had more roots in the humanistic plan of poor relief outlined in Vives’ *De subventionem pauperum* than in all the direct and indirect suggestions of Luther on this subject’ (Carl R. Steinbicker *Poor Relief in the Sixteenth Century* [Washington 1937] 15–16). Vives’ scheme, like others proposing to replace public begging by regulated welfare programs, met with opposition from certain

ecclesiastics, but had no anticlerical bias; the proposals were dealing with perceived conditions as best they could. See P. Bonenfant 'Les Origines et le caractère de la réforme de la bienfaisance publique aux Pays-Bas sous le règne de Charles-Quint' *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 5 (1926) 887–904; 6 (1927) 207–30; Marcel Bataillon 'J.L. Vives, réformateur de la bienfaisance' *BHR* 14 (1952) 141–58. For other bibliographical references see n23 below.

IRIDES, MISOPONUS¹

Irides What strange bird do I see flying this way? The face I recognize, but the clothes don't suit. Either I'm simply doting or this is Misoponus.² The chance must be taken: I'll accost the fellow, ragged as I am. – Greetings, Misoponus.

Misoponus Irides, I see.

Irides Greetings, Misoponus.

Misoponus Be quiet, I say.

10 **Irides** What? You don't want to be greeted?

Misoponus Not by that name, certainly.

Irides What's the matter? Aren't you the same person you had been? Or is your name changed along with your clothes?

Misoponus No, but I've got my old one back.

15 **Irides** Who were you then?

Misoponus Apicius.³

Irides Don't be ashamed of your old pal if you've met with better luck. It wasn't very long ago that you were in our order.

20 **Misoponus** Come over here out of the way, if you please, and you'll hear the whole story. I'm not ashamed of your order but of the first order.

Irides What order are you talking about, the Franciscan?

Misoponus Not at all, my good friend: the order of the down-and-out.⁴

Irides Well, you've plenty of company in that order!

25 **Misoponus** I was rich.⁵ I squandered my money. When it was gone, nobody knew Apicius. I ran away in disgrace and joined your club, preferring that to digging.⁶

Irides You were wise. But where did this strange sleekness come from? For your change of clothes isn't so surprising.

Misoponus Why?

30 **Irides** Because the goddess Laverna⁷ enriches many men unexpectedly.

Misoponus Do you suppose I've become rich by stealth?

Irides Perhaps by a more ignoble way: by open robbery, then.

Misoponus No, by your Poverty!⁸ Neither by stealth nor by robbery. But first let me explain my elegant appearance, which seems to surprise you so.

Irides When you were with us you were covered all over with sores.

Misoponus Well, I've employed a very kind physician.

5 **Irides** Who?

Misoponus None other than myself – unless you think there's anybody better disposed to myself than I am.

Irides But I wasn't aware that you practised medicine.

10 **Misoponus** All that adornment I had put on with paints, turpentine, sulphur, resin, birdlime, linen cloth, and blood. When I felt like doing so, I took off what I had put on.⁹

Irides Impostor! There was nothing more wretched-looking than you were. You might have played Job in the tragedy.¹⁰

15 **Misoponus** My need compelled it at the time – though Fortune too sometimes changes her skin.

Irides Tell me about fortune, then. Did you find some treasure?

Misoponus No, but a more comfortable source of income than yours.

Irides How could you make money when you had no stroke of luck?

Misoponus A profession's a livelihood anywhere.¹¹

20 **Irides** I understand: you mean the profession of picking pockets.

Misoponus Don't put it like that. I mean the profession of alchemy.

Irides It's hardly a fortnight since you left us, and have you mastered an art that others have scarcely learned in many years?

Misoponus I found a short cut.

25 **Irides** What, I beg you?

Misoponus Your profession had brought me about four gold pieces. By good luck I fell in with an old crony who hadn't managed his fortune any better than I had mine. We had some drinks together. As often happens, he began to tell me his story. I struck a bargain with him: I'd pay for the drinks¹² and he'd let me in on his trade secrets. He imparted them in good faith; now they're my means of support.

Irides May not one learn them?

Misoponus I'll share them with you for auld lang syne. You know there are lots of people everywhere who are dying to learn this art.

35 **Irides** I've heard that and I believe it.

Misoponus I worm my way into their company every chance I get. I boast of my art. When I see a sucker,¹³ I prepare the bait.

Irides How?

40 **Misoponus** I warn them freely not to trust practitioners of this art too readily, since many of them are cheats who play tricks to empty fools' pockets.

Irides That prologue is hardly appropriate to your business.

Misoponus More than that, I even add a warning not to believe me unless they're convinced of its certainty by their own eyes and hands.

Irides You tell me of a wonderful confidence in one's skill.

- 5 **Misoponus** I bid them attend while the metamorphosis is accomplished. 'Watch carefully,' I tell them; and to allay their scepticism I bid them perform the whole thing with their own hands while I look on from a distance, not lifting a finger. I order them to refine some molten stuff or take it to a goldsmith to be refined. I predict how much gold or silver may be liquefied.
10 Next I order them to take what's been liquefied to more goldsmiths, to be tested by a touchstone.¹⁴ They find the weight to be what was predicted and the gold and silver thoroughly refined. (Whether gold or silver is used makes no difference, except that I think the experiment is less risky with silver.)

Irides Then your art has no trick in it?

- 15 **Misoponus** On the contrary, the whole thing's a trick.¹⁵

Irides I don't see it.

- Misoponus** I'll make you see it. First, I stipulate that I want no fee unless and until the experiment is demonstrated. I give them some fine powder, as if that does the whole business. The method of preparing the powder I don't
20 share unless they pay a large sum. I require them to swear not to divulge the secret of the art for six whole months to any person living or dead.

Irides I don't yet hear what the trick is.

- Misoponus** The whole trick turns on one coal prepared for this purpose. I hollow it out and insert molten silver, the amount I predict must be yielded.
25 After the powder is spread over this, I make ready the pot so that it's surrounded by live coals not only below and on the sides but also above. I convince them this is part of the art. Among the coals placed on top I lay the one containing silver or gold. Melted by the heat, this flows down on the other stuff, say tin or bronze, which liquefies. When the refining takes place,
30 what was mixed with it is discovered.

Irides A clever art, but how do you fool them if somebody else does the work with his own hands?

- Misoponus** When he's done everything according to my directions, I just step up before the alchemic vessel is moved and look around to make sure
35 nothing's been accidentally omitted. I remark that one or two coals seem to be missing on top. Without being noticed I lay mine on. I pretend I'm taking it from the pile of other coals, or it's been so placed there beforehand that it's not recognizable and it fools him. I pick it up.

- Irides** But when this doesn't succeed for those who try it in your absence,
40 what's your explanation?

Misoponus I run no risk. The money's paid now. I mention something or other – the pot wasn't clean, or the coals were bad, or the fire didn't have the

right temperature. Finally, part of my professional acumen is not to stay too long in the same place!

Irides Is your profit from this profession enough to support you?

Misoponus Oh, yes; in fine style too. Hereafter, if you're smart, you'll give
5 up this wretchedness and join my order.

Irides Oh, no, I'd rather try to get you back into mine.

Misoponus What? Voluntarily return to what I've once fled from and give up the good thing I've found?

Irides My profession has the advantage of becoming more attractive as
10 you grow accustomed to it. For though there are many men who quit the Franciscan or Benedictine order,¹⁶ did you ever see one who left mine after having lived in it for some time? For you could hardly have tasted the pleasures of begging in merely a few months.

Misoponus That taste taught me it's the most miserable thing there is.

Irides Then why does nobody give it up?

Misoponus Maybe because some men are naturally miserable.

Irides I wouldn't trade this 'misery' even for kings' wealth.¹⁷ For begging's the nearest thing to possessing a kingdom.

Misoponus What do I hear? Coal's the nearest thing to snow?

Irides Tell me, in what respect are kings luckiest?

Misoponus In being free to do as they please.¹⁸

Irides This freedom, than which nothing is sweeter, belongs to no king more than it does to us. I don't doubt there are many kings who envy us. Whether there's war or peace, we're safe.¹⁹ We're not drafted for the
25 army; we're not called to public offices; we're not taxed when the public is plundered by levies. No one investigates our lives. If any crime is committed, even an uncommonly savage one, who would think a beggar worth arresting? Even if we strike a man, he's ashamed to fight with a beggar.²⁰ Neither in peace nor in war may kings enjoy themselves, and
30 the mightier they are the more men they fear. The common people have a superstitious dread of harming us, as though we were under God's protection.

Misoponus But meanwhile you live filthily in rags and huts.

Irides What have these to do with true happiness? What you're talking
35 about are external to man. To these rags we owe our happiness.

Misoponus But I'm afraid you're going to lose a good deal of this happiness before long.

Irides How so?

Misoponus Because citizens are already muttering that beggars shouldn't
40 be allowed to roam about at will,²¹ but that each city should support its own beggars and all the able-bodied ones forced to work.²²

Irides Why are they planning this?

Misoponus Because they find monstrous crimes committed under pretext of begging. In the second place, there's not a little danger from your order.

Irides I've often heard talk of this kind. It will be done at the Greek Calends.²³

5 **Misoponus** Sooner than you'd like, perhaps.

NOTES

- 1 'Son of Irus' and 'hater of work' in Greek. Irus was a beggar who caused Ulysses trouble in Ithaca (*Odyssey* 18.1–88). The name became proverbial for any poor man; see *Adagia* I vi 76.
- 2 Cf the opening lines of 'The Old Men's Chat' and 'A Pilgrimage.'
- 3 Roman gourmand and reputed author of a famous book on cookery (see 'The Profane Feast' n5)
- 4 Not a mendicant friar but a lay vagabond or beggar. Both are poor, but the Franciscan is vowed to poverty (like those in 'The Well-to-do Beggars'), while the other is down on his luck but not poor by choice or on principle.
- 5 And hence had friends. But, as this world goes, friends may vanish when one's wealth disappears; *Adagia* I iii 24.
- 6 'I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed' (Luke 16:3).
- 7 Goddess of thieves; *Adagia* IV i 3
- 8 Penia; not a goddess but poverty personified, as by Aristophanes *Plutus* 415–609 or – the most famous example – by St Francis of Assisi, who 'married' Poverty. See for example Sassetta's painting *The Marriage of St Francis with Lady Poverty* (before 1450).
- 9 'There is an other moste wicked kinde of beggers not to be pitied, that is to witte of them, whiche with birdlime, meale, bloude, and corrupte matier, with crusted woundes and counterfaite blisters doo peinte themselues full of soares and cankers, diuers fainginge diuers infirmities, with sundrie sleighes do shew themselues miserable to the beholders' (Cornelius Agrippa *De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum et artium* [c 1530] chapter 65 trans James Sanford [1569; stc 204] 105; ed Catherine M. Dunn [Northridge, California 1974] 224).
- 10 Because it is a dramatic dialogue in elevated style, the book of Job could be considered a 'tragedy' (*tragoedia*), though here Irides may be referring to the figure of Job in a procession or pageant. Milton regarded Job as 'the brief model' of an epic (*The Reason of Church Government* book 2 prologue; in *Milton's Prose* ed Malcolm W. Wallace [Oxford 1931] 110). Cf Lawrence Besserman *The Legend of Job in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass 1979).
- 11 Proverbial; *Adagia* I vii 33. Cf 'Military Affairs' n18.
- 12 *Adagia* IV iv 40
- 13 Erasmus' word is *larum*, a ravenous sea-bird, a gull or petrel. But to include the notion of naïveté or simpleness as well as voracity or avarice, 'sucker' fits here. See *Adagia* II x 48.
- 14 *lydium lapidem* or Heraclian stone. When rubbed against ore it tells the quantity of gold and silver, according to Pliny 33.126. So Erasmus explains in *Adagia* I v 87, where other references are added.

- 15 This trick of inserting molten silver in a hollow coal and thus convincing the innocent bystanders that he has produced the silver by alchemy is described in more detail in *The Canon's Yeoman's Tale* 972–1248. Similarities in the two versions have convinced some scholars, including the ASD editors, that Erasmus was clearly influenced by Chaucer. This inference is unsupported by any real evidence. There is no reason whatever for supposing that Erasmus could or did read fourteenth-century English. He might have known of Chaucer's version indirectly by hearing it related by More or some other English friend. It is more likely that both Chaucer and Erasmus were dealing with material that was common property, part of the lore familiar to readers, writers, and others interested in tales about alchemists.
- 16 Pampirus joins and leaves a number of orders in 'The Old Men's Chat' (456:30–458:9).
- 17 Some beggars pretending to be pilgrims beg in God's name from door to door, 'and these in the meane season will not chaunge theire life with Kinges, so that they maye freely wander where they please and doo what euer they thinke good in warre and peace' (Agrippa *De incertitudine* chapter 65; see n9 above).
- 18 Cf 'The Godly Feast' 184:33–185:25, 'The Fabulous Feast' 578:39–579:6, and 'Things and Names' 811:4–5, with the notes.
- 19 Erasmus does not here discuss war as productive of undisciplined or criminal vagabonds, yet like all social critics he was keenly aware of this evil. War was an easily identifiable and recurrent cause of vice, misery, and poverty, and consequently of beggary. The returned soldier, now unemployed and perhaps desperate, hardened by his military experience to violence and crime, is met in 'Military Affairs,' 'The Soldier and the Carthusian,' and 'Cyclops.'
- 20 A similar observation is made in a long passage about natural fools in *Moriae encomium* LB IV 436C–439A / ASD IV-3 114:795–116:862 / CWE 27 109–12.
- 21 Primitive Christianity did not allow beggars to 'run from door to door,' says Tyndale (*Obedience of a Christian Man* [1528; STC 24446] fol lxxii; in *Works* I [PS 42] 231).
- 22 A remark in 'The Godly Feast' on vagabonds has a modern ring: they 'need a job rather than a dole' (199:41).
- 23 Never; *Adagia* I v 84. Erasmus denied that he condemned begging friars outright, but his disapproval of their practices is plain to see (as in *Apologiae contra Stunicam* LB IX 370A–B). If they are able-bodied, let them work (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 231F).

Of special interest to readers of Erasmus, More, and Vives are contemporary debates concerning the wretched condition of the poor and efforts to improve it by political action. A few of the more significant works may be mentioned here. On the European scene in general see Michael Mollat *The Poor in the Middle Ages* (New Haven, Conn 1986); B. Geremek *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris* (Cambridge 1987); and O. Capitani *La concezione della povertà nel medioevo: antologia di scritti a cura di Ovidio Capitani* (Bologna 1974). For England, chapter 9 of Christopher Dyer *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge 1989) on 'Poverty and Charity' is an excellent summary of recent work. Gordon Zeeveld's *Foundations of Tudor Policy* (Cambridge, Mass 1948) and the influential books and articles by G.R. Elton emphasized the policies and achievements of Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's principal minister and agent

in the 1530s. See also A.G. Dickens *Thomas Cromwell* (London 1959) and *The English Reformation* (London 1964); and James K. McConica *English Humanists and Reformation Politics* (Oxford 1965). For studies of urban poverty see Natalie Z. Davis 'Poor Relief, Humanism, and Heresy: The Case of Lyon' *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 5 (1968) 215–75 on the Aumône-Générale of Lyon, instituted in the early 1530s; R.M. Kingdon 'Social Welfare in Calvin's Geneva' *American Historical Review* 76 (1971) 50–69; Brian Pullan *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice* (Cambridge, Mass 1971). Two English works of the 1530s made thoughtful contributions to the debate on poor relief and related problems. Thomas Starkey's *Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset* was presented to the king in 1535 or 1536 but not printed until 1871; see the edition by Kathleen M. Burton (London 1948). William Marshall's *The Form and Manner of Helping Poor People, Devised and Practised in the City of Ypres* (1535) was a translation of a contemporary tract. Excerpts are printed in F.R. Salter *Some Early Tracts on Poor Relief* 32–76 (introduction 563 above). On Christopher St German's scheme (1530–1) for poor relief, submitted to Thomas Cromwell and evidently used by him in drafting the Beggars Act of 1536, see J.A. Guy *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More* (New Haven and London [1980]) 151–5, and J.B. Trapp in the *Times Literary Supplement* 21 August 1981 page 954. Salter 124–6 prints extracts of the Beggars Act of 1536. References to writings on begging and poor relief should include mention of Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (*The Ship of Fools*) (1494) section 63; the best translation is that by Edwin H. Zeydel (New York 1944; repr 1962). As a predecessor of Erasmus' *Moriae encomium*, Brant's work, long famous, much translated, and often reprinted, deserves closer comparison than it usually receives from readers of Erasmus. To studies of it add Lawrence A. Silver 'Of Beggars – Lucas van Leyden and Sebastian Brant' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976) 253–7.

THE FABULOUS FEAST

Convivium fabulosum

First printed in the August–September 1524 edition.

Some of the anecdotes (*fabulae*, hence the title of the colloquy) told at this party belong to well-known types found in ancient and medieval texts, in folklore, or in both. Others, such as those about Antony, priest of Louvain, may have come from current stories going the rounds or related in various times and places of various individuals, as so often happens with yarns like these. They could have come from *facetiae* (they are not in Poggio's collection, however) or *fabliaux* or gossip we can no longer trace.

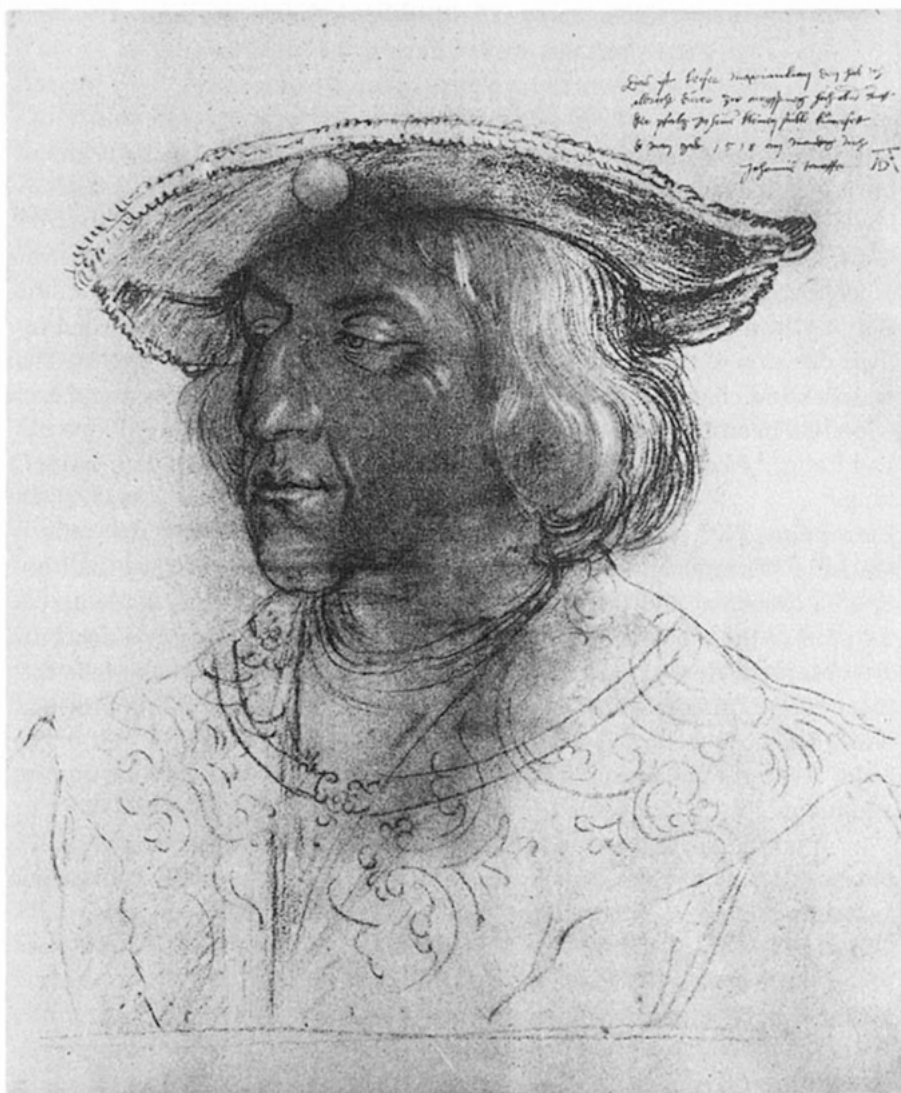
To know where Erasmus heard or read the excellent stories about Louis XI and Maximilian would be of particular interest; see the notes to those pages. Certainly Erasmus' exceptionally wide acquaintance with royalty, nobility, and court officials of every degree was enough to furnish him with such material. But stories of many kinds, however firmly attached to the names of particular persons, very often have analogues in legend and belong to folklore as much as to biography. The story of the king, the peasant Conon, and the turnip, for instance, is a recognizable specimen of a familiar type describing humble, guileless service to the great, whether these be disguised (Zeus and Baucis and Philemon) or identified. Plutarch relates that the Persian king Artaxerxes II (436–358 BC) took pains to show himself as grateful for small presents as for large ones, and on one occasion thanked a poor labourer who, having nothing else to give, offered him water in his two hands (*Moralia* 172B *Apophthegmata regum*). On another occasion the same king thanked a poor peasant for the gift of an apple (*Artaxerxes* 4.4). Erasmus, who repeats these stories in his *Apophthegmata* LB IV 232B–C, calls them to Prince Henry's attention when writing a fulsome letter to the future Henry VIII (Allen Ep 104:48–59 / CWE Ep 104:56–69). Pope Pius II remembered this story of the gift of water one day in the summer of 1462 when a cowherd offered him some fresh milk in a bowl, as the pope himself relates in his autobiography (*Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: The Commentaries of Pius II* trans Florence A. Gragg, ed Leona C. Gabel [New York 1959; repr 1962] 281).

Erasmus deftly makes characters and situations credible. He puts people in specific places – Antwerp, Louvain, Leiden, Burgundy. Maccus died 'not long ago'; an incident occurred 'when I was a boy in Deventer'; the visit of Conon to the king took place during the years when Louis lived in exile

in Burgundy. Anecdotes about Maximilian could have filled a book, and in the sixteenth century did so. In addition to all other opportunities to hear stories about the emperor, Erasmus as a member of Charles v's council may have been able to add to his stock of gossip or report about Maximilian's temperament and practices.

Any reader well acquainted with Erasmus knows how ample a store of tales, quotations, and proverbs he had gathered from books. Until lately, folklore in Erasmus' writings had received little attention from scholars. Preserved Smith made a good beginning in his *Key to the Colloquies*, but the first study of the subject in any depth, at least with respect to *Convivium fabulosum*, was Marcel Bataillon's illuminating 'Erasme conteur: folklore et invention narrative' in *Mélanges de langue et de littérature médiévales offerts à Pierre Le Gentil* (Paris 1973) 85-104. This essential article shows how typical are the tales of Louis xi when compared with the chronicles and other writings about him, yet how suggestive the changes or ambiguities may be in various redactions of the tales in certain versions borrowed directly or indirectly from Erasmus himself. Even *fabliaux* describing incidents of the kind for which Antony is said to have been notorious had a long life in fiction. Bataillon finds many interesting analogues and a curious variety of adaptations of Erasmus' stories by later writers. These do not tell us when, where, or how Erasmus himself learned of the anecdotes, but they add to our understanding of the ways of tales and texts. With a vast collection such as Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (rev ed Bloomington, Ind and London 1955) at hand, an investigator soon learns to be cautious in surmises about the 'sources' both of oral and of written literature. See also J.-C. Margolin's essay 'L'art du récit et du conte chez Erasme' in *La nouvelle française à la Renaissance* ed Lionello Sozzi (Geneva and Paris 1981) 131-65. Although William Nelson's *Fact or Fiction: The Dilemma of the Renaissance Storyteller* (Cambridge, Mass 1973) discusses vernacular rather than Latin fiction, it is a study that students of Renaissance literature should not overlook.

Bataillon says that the earliest vernacular version of the Conon story is a German translation of 1550 ('Erasme conteur' n17). A collection of *Tales and Quick Answers*, by an unidentified compiler (London c 1535; stc 23665) paraphrases this story and three others told by Erasmus in this colloquy (577:20-34, 578:8-29, 580:8-27). Three (576:7-35, 578:8-29, 583:7-36) are retold in Henri Estienne's *Apologie pour Hérodote* (Geneva 1566), which was turned into English by R. Carew as *A World of Wonders* (London 1607; stc 10553) 87-9. On the part played by Estienne's *Apologie* in the transmission of 'The Fabulous Feast' see Bataillon 'Erasme conteur' 97-100.



Maximilian I (1459–1519)
Albrecht Dürer, 1518
Albertina, Vienna

POLYMYTHUS, GELASINUS, EUTRAPELUS, ASTEUS,
PHILYTHLUS, PHILOGELOS, EUGLOTTUS,
LEROCHARES, ADOLESCHES, [LEVINUS]¹

- 5 **Polymythus** As it is not fitting for a well-constituted state to be without laws and a leader, so it is not fitting that a feast be leaderless and lawless.²
- Gelasinus** So heartily do I agree with this that I'll assent in the name of the whole people.
- 10 **Polymythus** Ho there, boy: bring us the dice. Let the rule be awarded by their decision to the one Jove favours. Hurrah! He favours Eutrapelus. That wasn't blind chance; a better choice could not have been made, even if each tribe had been polled man by man.³ As the proverb has it (sound idea but bad Latin),⁴ *Novus rex, novus lex* 'New king, new law.' Ordain your laws, O
- 15 king.⁵
- Eutrapelus** That all may be well⁶ at this feast, I decree first that only amusing stories shall be presented. Whoever fails to tell a story shall be fined a drachma⁷ and the money spent on wine. Even stories made up on the spur of the moment shall be lawful, provided probability and decorum
- 20 are observed.⁸ If everyone has a story, two persons, the one who tells the most entertaining tale and the one who tells the dullest, shall pay for the wine. The host shall not be charged for wine; he shall stand the cost of the food. If there's any argument about this matter, Gelasinus shall be umpire and judge.
- 25 If you assent to these articles, let them be ratified. Whoever is unwilling to obey the law, let him depart – in such wise, however, that it shall be just and right for him to return to the drinking party next day.
- Gelasinus** We will that the law introduced by the king be ratified by our votes. But where is the round of stories to start from?
- 30 **Eutrapelus** The host; where else?
- Asteus** May one say a few words, O king?
- Eutrapelus** Of course. Or do you suppose this is an untimely feast?⁹
- Asteus** The jurists say that what's inequitable can't be law.
- Eutrapelus** I agree.
- 35 **Asteus** But your law makes the best story equal to the worst.
- Eutrapelus** Where pleasure's the object, the worst speaker deserves praise no less than the best, because he's no less entertaining, just as the only singer who gives pleasure is one who sings exceptionally well or exceptionally badly. Don't more people laugh at a cuckoo's song than at a nightingale's?
- 40 In this matter, mediocrity¹⁰ is no recommendation.
- Asteus** But why penalize those who win praise?

Eutrapelus Lest too much good fortune rouse some Nemesis¹¹ against them if at one and the same time they gain both praise and exemption.¹²

Asteus By Bromian¹³ Bacchus, Minos¹⁴ himself never proposed a juster law!

Philythlus Have you no law to propose about the method of drinking?

5 **Eutrapelus** After thinking it over, I'm going to follow the example of Agesilaus, king of the Lacedaemonians.¹⁵

Philythlus What did he do?

Eutrapelus On one occasion, when chosen toastmaster by a throw of the dice and asked by the man in charge of arrangements¹⁶ how much wine to serve
10 to each guest, he said, 'If you have plenty, give to each as much as he wants; if the supply's running low, give the same amount to all.'

Philythlus What did the Laconian¹⁷ mean by that?

Eutrapelus He was acting to forestall drunkenness or dissatisfaction at the feast.

15 **Philythlus** How so?

Eutrapelus Because some like to drink rather copiously, some sparingly; you find teetotalers, too, such as Romulus is reputed to have been.¹⁸ Thus if wine is given only on request, in the first place no one will be forced to drink and yet there will be enough for those who like a good deal. So
20 nobody's unhappy at the party. Again, if a limited supply of wine is served in equal amounts to everyone, moderate drinkers will have enough. And no one can object when a person who was going to drink freely settles down to moderation. If this precedent is agreeable, I'll follow it, for we want this party to be fabulous, not bibulous.

25 **Philythlus** What would Romulus drink, then?

Eutrapelus The same thing dogs drink.

Philythlus Wasn't that inappropriate for a king?

Eutrapelus No more so than for kings to breathe the same air as dogs. Unless there's this difference: the king doesn't drink the same water a dog
30 drinks, but the air a king breathes out a dog breathes in, and vice versa. Alexander the Great would have won more fame had he drunk with the dogs, for nothing is worse in a king, who has the care of so many thousands of human beings, than drunkenness.¹⁹ But Romulus' abstemiousness is demonstrated by a witty aphorism of his. When someone, noticing his
35 abstention from wine, remarked that wine would be cheap if everybody drank as he did, Romulus replied, 'Oh, no, I think it would be very dear if everybody drank as I do – for I drink as much as I like.'

Gelasinus I do wish our friend Canon Johann von Botzheim of Constance were here.²⁰ He'd be a Romulus for us, because he too lives up to
40 his reputation for abstemiousness. In other respects he's a merry and companionable guest.

Polymythus Come on: if you're able, I won't say to drink and whistle simultaneously (which Plautus says is hard to do)²¹ but to eat and listen (which is quite easy), I'll inaugurate the duty of storytelling with good omen.²² If the story's not funny, be assured it's a Dutch one.²³ – Some of you,

5 I suppose, have heard the name of Maccus.²⁴

Gelasinus He died not long ago.

Polymythus When he had come to the city of Leiden a complete stranger and wanted to call attention to himself by means of some prank (for that was his way), he went into a shoemaker's shop.²⁵ He says hello. The shoemaker,
 10 eager to make a sale, asks whether he wants something. Maccus having turned his eyes towards some leggings hanging there, the shoemaker asks if he wouldn't like leggings. When Maccus nods, he looks for the right size, and when they're found he quickly brings them out and – as the custom is – puts them on him. Now that Maccus was elegantly fitted with leggings,
 15 the shoemaker says, 'How handsomely a pair of double-soled shoes would match these leggings.' Asked whether he would like shoes too, Maccus nods. They're found and put on. Maccus praised the leggings, praised the shoes. Gloating to himself, the shoemaker echoes his praise, hoping to get more than the shoes were worth, since the buyer was so pleased with his goods
 20 and by now the two were already on easy terms. At this point, Maccus said, 'Tell me frankly, has it never happened to you that a man you've fitted thus with leggings and shoes for walking, as you've just done to me, went off without paying?' 'Never,' said he. 'But if it should happen, what would you do then?' 'I'd go after him as he ran away,' said the shoemaker. Then Maccus:
 25 'Do you mean it or are you joking?' 'I say it in dead earnest,' he replied, 'and I'd do it in dead earnest.' 'I'll find out,' said Maccus. 'Look, I'll run ahead for the shoes; you run after me.' With that he took to his heels. Instantly the shoemaker ran after him as fast as he could, screaming 'Stop thief! Stop thief!' When citizens from every direction turned out of their houses at this
 30 cry, Maccus stopped them from seizing him by this device: laughing, and looking unperturbed, he said, 'Don't hold up our race; it's a match for a cup of ale.' So now they all looked on as spectators at the contest, thinking the shoemaker's clamour was a trick he was using to help him win the race. At last the shoemaker, beaten, sweating, and breathless, returned home. Maccus
 35 took the prize.²⁶

Gelasinus That Maccus escaped from a shoemaker but not from a thief.

Polymythus Why do you say that?

Gelasinus Because he carried the thief with him.

Polymythus Perhaps he didn't have the money at hand then but paid it
 40 later.

Gelasinus But it was a case of theft.

Polymythus It was, in fact, tried as such afterwards, but Maccus was already known to several of the magistrates.

Gelasinus What was his defence?

Polymythus Defence, you ask, in a case so easily won? It was the plaintiff, not the defendant, who was in the greater danger.

Gelasinus How so?

Polymythus Because Maccus charged him with slander and sued under the Remmian law,²⁷ which enjoins that whoever accuses a man of a crime he can't prove shall himself bear the punishment the accused would have suffered if convicted. Maccus denied touching anyone else's property without the owner's permission – instead the owner furnished it of his own accord – nor had there been any talk of a price between them. He had challenged the shoemaker to a race; the shoemaker had accepted the challenge and had no complaint, since he was beaten.

Gelasinus This suit is not very different from the ass's shadow.²⁸ What finally happened?

Polymythus When they had had a good laugh, one of the judges invited Maccus to dinner and paid the shoemaker his money.

Something similar occurred at Deventer²⁹ when I was a boy. It was the season when fishermen rule and butchers starve.³⁰ A certain fellow was standing by the window of a fruitseller (or *oporopolis*, if you prefer the Greek form),³¹ a decidedly stout woman. His eyes were fixed on the produce she had for sale. She asked him in the usual way if he would like something, and when she saw the man feasting his eyes on the figs she said, 'You want figs? They're very nice ones.' When he nodded, she asked how many pounds he wanted. 'You want five pounds?' At his nod, she dumped that quantity of figs into his bag. While she put back the scales, he walked off – not running but taking his time. When she came out for her money, she saw the buyer going away. She followed, with more noise than speed. He continued on his way, pretending not to notice. Finally, after a crowd had gathered at the woman's outburst, he stopped. There in public the case was tried, to the bystanders' amusement. The buyer denied having bought anything but said he had accepted what was freely offered to him. If she wanted to take the matter to court, he was quite ready.

Gelasinus Come now, I'll tell a story not very different from yours and perhaps no worse, except that this one does not come from a source so well known as Maccus. Pythagoras used to divide the whole market-place into three classes of people: buyers, sellers (each of these classes, he would say, had worries and therefore wasn't happy), and others, who came to the market-place just to see the sights – see what was going on. These alone were happy because, being carefree, they had a good time for nothing. And a

philosopher, said he, spends his time in this world as do those folk in the market.³² But in our markets there is a fourth class of people. They're usually strolling about; they don't buy, sell, or look on at their leisure but watch carefully to see if they can steal something. And in this class are found some
 5 who are astonishingly nimble – born as favourites of Mercury,³³ you might say.

Our host presented a story with a conclusion;³⁴ I'll contribute one with a preface.³⁵ Hear now what happened recently in Antwerp. A certain priest there had received a moderate sum of money – but in silver. A trickster
 10 noticed this. He went to the priest, who wore at his belt a purse filled with coins. He greets the priest courteously and says he's commissioned to buy a new chasuble (which is the outermost garment worn by a priest celebrating mass)³⁶ for his parish priest. He asks the priest to help him a little in this matter by going with him to suppliers of such chasubles, in order to select
 15 the right fit by means of the priest's own measurements, for, he thought, the priest's size was very near that of his own priest. This favour, since it seemed trivial, the priest readily promised. They go to a certain man's shop. A chasuble is brought out; the priest tries it on; the seller swears it's a perfect fit. After examining the priest now in front, now in back, the trickster said it
 20 would do but pretended it was a little too short in front. Afraid of losing a sale, the seller promptly insists that this is not the fault of the chasuble but that the heavy purse makes it short in that part. The rest is quickly told. The priest lays his purse aside, and they have another look. Suddenly, when the priest's back is turned, the trickster snatches the purse and away he goes.
 25 Off goes the priest in pursuit, clad as he is in a chasuble, and after the priest goes the seller. The priest screams 'Stop thief!'; the seller, 'Stop priest!'; the trickster, 'Hold the mad priest!' – and people believe him when they see the priest dashing about in public in such attire. And so while one delays the other, the rogue escapes.

30 **Eutrapelus** Mere hanging's too good for a swindler like that.

Gelasinus Unless he's already hanged.

Eutrapelus I wish he were – not alone, but along with him those who encourage such villains, to the detriment of society.

Gelasinus They don't encourage them for nothing. There's a chain extending
 35 from highest to lowest.³⁷

Eutrapelus Better get back to the stories.

Asteus Your turn, if it's permissible to force a king to take his turn.

Eutrapelus I won't be forced; on the contrary, I'll take my turn gladly. Otherwise I'd be a tyrant, not a king, if I rejected the laws I prescribe for
 40 others.

Asteus But they say a king is above the laws.³⁸

Eutrapelus That's not altogether mistaken if by 'king' you mean the supreme ruler they used to call Caesar;³⁹ next, if by 'above the laws' you mean that what others obey more or less because they must, he observes much more perfectly of his own free will. A good prince is to a state what soul is to body.⁴⁰ Why add 'good,' when a bad prince is not a prince at all, just as an evil spirit that invades a man's body is not a soul?

But on to the story; and I think it's appropriate for me, the king,⁴¹ to provide a tale about royalty.

When King Louis XI of France lived abroad in Burgundy during civil strife at home,⁴² he chanced while hunting to become acquainted with a peasant named Conon, an honest, good-hearted fellow. Now monarchs delight in men of this type. Often the king turned aside to Conon's cottage after hunting,⁴³ and, as great rulers are sometimes diverted by commonplace things, he used to take much pleasure in eating turnips there. Soon after Louis was restored and was already ruling in France, Conon's wife urged him to remind the king of their former hospitality – pay him a visit and take him some fine turnips as a gift. Conon balked, saying it would be effort wasted, that princes don't remember such services. But his wife prevailed. Conon chose some of his best turnips and prepared for his journey. On the way, though, he himself found the food too tempting and gradually consumed all the turnips except one unusually big one.

The moment Conon ventured into the hall where the king was to pass, he was recognized by his Majesty and summoned. Eagerly he brought out his gift, and the king accepted it even more eagerly, bidding an attendant store it carefully among his most treasured possessions. He bade Conon to lunch with him, thanked him afterwards, and when Conon wished to return home ordered that he be given a thousand gold crowns for the turnip.⁴⁴

When, as generally happens, news of this event spread through the king's household staff, one of the courtiers presented him with a horse – no bad one, either. Aware that the courtier was prompted by the royal generosity to Conon and hoped for a rich prize, the king accepted the present with uncommonly gracious countenance, and after calling his leading councillors together began to consider what gift would be a suitable recompense for so beautiful and so costly a horse. All the while the donor of the horse was building castles in the air, thinking to himself, 'If he gave so large a reward for a turnip presented by a peasant, how much more lavishly will he pay for such a horse offered by a courtier!' When the king had deliberated as though over some grave matter and received various advice from his councillors, and the fortune hunter had been duped a long while by false hopes, the king at last said, 'I've just thought what to give him.' Beckoning to one of his nobles, he whispers to him to fetch what he would find in the

bedchamber, wrapped in silk, telling him in the same breath exactly where to look. The turnip is brought in! This, wrapped as it was, the king bestows on the courtier with his own hand, adding that he deems a treasure that had cost him a thousand crowns a fair exchange for a horse. The courtier hurries
 5 off, removes the wrapping, and finds – not coals (as the saying is) instead of treasure,⁴⁵ but a half-shriveled turnip. Thus was the deceiver deceived,⁴⁶ and everyone had a good laugh.

Asteus Now if you'll allow a commoner to speak about royal topics, O king, I'll relate something your story reminds me of; it's about this same Louis.
 10 For as one occasion begets another,⁴⁷ so story begets story. When a servant saw a louse crawling on the royal robe, he indicated, by falling on his knees and raising his hand, that he wished to perform a service of some sort or other. After Louis gave permission, he removed the louse and secretly threw it away. When the king asked what it was, the servant was ashamed to
 15 confess. On the king's insistence, he admitted it was a louse. 'A good sign,' said Louis, 'for it shows I'm human'⁴⁸ – because this type of vermin infests human beings particularly, most of all in adolescence. And he ordered forty crowns to be awarded to him for the service. Some time after this, another servant, who had witnessed the happy result of so humble a service but did
 20 not consider how much difference it makes whether you do a thing sincerely or artfully, approached the king with a similar movement and (again with the king's permission) pretended to pick from the royal robe something he quickly threw away. When the king urged the shifty fellow to tell him what it was, he finally answered, with a marvellously feigned embarrassment, that
 25 it was a flea. Detecting a trick, the king said, 'What, will you make a dog of me?' He ordered the man to be taken out and given forty lashes instead of forty crowns.

Philythlus It's not safe, as I understand, to bandy jests with kings. For as lions sometimes submit quietly to stroking, they're lions when the mood
 30 takes them⁴⁹ – and goodbye playmate! In like fashion do princes grant favours.

But I'll add an anecdote of the same kind to yours, in order that we may not stray from Louis, who enjoyed tricking greedy sycophants.⁵⁰ He had received from some source a gift of ten thousand crowns. Now every
 35 time fresh money falls into the hands of princes, all the bureaucrats hunt it down and try to snatch a share of the booty. Louis knew this very well. When, therefore, this money was displayed on a table, the more to rouse everyone's hopes, he spoke as follows to those who were standing by: 'Don't you think I'm a wealthy king, eh? Where shall we invest so much money?
 40 It's a present; it should be presented in turn. Where now are the friends to whom I am indebted for their services? Let them step up now, before

the treasure flies away.' At this word many hurried forward, none without hope of getting something. When the king noticed one especially greedy man already devouring the money with his eyes, he turned to him and said, 'Friend, what have you to say?' The man reminded him that he had kept the royal falcons long and dutifully, not without heavy expense to himself. One added one thing, another another, each exaggerating his service as much as possible in his statement, and telling fibs about it, too. The king heard them all kindly and acknowledged each one's speech. This consultation lasted a long time to enable him to torment them the longer with hope and fear.

Standing in their midst was the lord chancellor, for he had been commanded to attend. More circumspect than the rest, he did not proclaim his services but acted the part of spectator at the play. Turning to him at last, the king said, 'What says my chancellor? He alone makes no request and does not proclaim his services.' 'As for me,' replied the chancellor, 'I have received more from the royal bounty than I deserved. So far am I from desiring to ask for more, that my greatest concern is how to justify your Majesty's generosity to me.' Then said the king, 'So you're the only one who does not need money?' 'Your bounty has already freed me from want,' answered the other. Thereupon the king, turning to the others, said, 'Truly I'm the most splendid king in the world if I have such a wealthy chancellor.' At this word they all felt more confident that the money would be distributed to the others, since the chancellor was not trying to get it. After toying with them quite a while in this manner, the king made the chancellor take the whole sum home with him. Then, turning to the others – now dejected – he said, 'You'll have another occasion to look forward to.'

Philogelos What I'm going to tell may seem rather insipid. Pray don't suspect me of fraud or trickery on that account. I don't want to give an impression of scheming to get off easily.

A certain man came to the same Louis with a request that the king confer on him an office which happened to be vacant in his village. After hearing his petition, the king replied promptly, 'You shan't have it,' clearly cutting off all hope of his getting what he asked. The petitioner thanked the king with equal promptness and took his leave. Gathering from his very looks that he was not altogether stupid, the king, thinking that the fellow had failed to understand his answer, ordered him recalled. He came back. Thereupon the king said, 'You understood my answer?' 'Yes, I understood it.' 'What did I say?' 'That I wouldn't get the office.' 'Then why did you thank me?' 'Since I'm busy at home,' he replied, 'it would have been very inconvenient for me to pursue a doubtful hope here. Now I take as a favour your quick refusal of a favour and count as gain whatever I might have lost if beguiled by vain expectations.' Judging from this response that the man

was anything but lazy, the king, after asking a few questions, said, 'You shall have what you seek, in order to thank me twice,' and at the same time turning to his officials he said, 'Get his commission to him without delay, so he won't have to hang about here and lose money.'

- 5 **Euglottus** I could tell stories about Louis too, but I prefer one about our Maximilian.⁵¹ As he was never in the habit of burying his money, so was he very easy on those who had squandered theirs, provided they were members of the nobility. When he wanted to help a young man of this class, he assigned to him the mission of collecting from a certain city – on what
10 pretext I don't know – a hundred thousand florins. But the stipulation was that anything the agent could get by his own ingenuity he might keep. He squeezed fifty thousand florins out of them. To the emperor he paid thirty. Pleased by this unanticipated windfall, the emperor dismissed the man, asking no further questions. Meantime the treasury officials and auditors
15 discovered that more had been taken than was turned over. They protested to the emperor that he should send for the man. He was summoned and came at once. 'I hear you took in fifty thousand,' said Maximilian. He admitted it. 'You handed over only thirty thousand.' This too he admitted. 'You must give an accounting,' said the king. This he promised to do and went away.
20 When nothing was done, he was called back again at the insistence of the officials. Then the emperor said, 'You were ordered recently to render an accounting.' 'I remember,' he replied, 'and I'm working at it.' Suspecting the books were not yet balanced, the emperor let him go. After he got off in this fashion, the officials were beside themselves with indignation, clamouring
25 that it was intolerable he should trifle with the emperor so openly. They persuaded him to have the man recalled and to compel him to show his accounting then and there, in their presence. The emperor consented. The man came as soon as he was summoned: no evasiveness. Then said the emperor, 'Didn't you promise an accounting?' 'I promised it,' he replied.
30 'It's needed now. These men here will take it; you can't dodge any longer.' The officials sat by with their notebooks ready. Thereupon the young man said slyly, 'Most invincible emperor, I don't refuse an accounting, but I'm rather inexperienced in computations of this kind, never having rendered one before. These men sitting by are thoroughly familiar with such accounts.
35 If I once see how they make them up, I can easily do the same. I beg you to bid them produce an example. They'll see I'm quick to learn.' The emperor understood what he meant – those he was talking about didn't – and said with a smile, 'You're right, and that's a fair request.' So he dismissed the young man, who was hinting that they rendered accounts to the emperor
40 in the same way he had, namely by keeping a large share of the money for themselves.⁵²

Lerochares Now it's time for the story to change from horses to donkeys, as they say⁵³ – from kings to Antony,⁵⁴ a priest of Louvain, who was a favourite of Philip the Good.⁵⁵ Many of this man's quips and practical jokes are reported, but a great many of them are on the nasty side, for he was in
 5 the habit of seasoning most of his pranks with a certain perfume that has no very beautiful name but smells worse. I'll choose one of the cleaner ones.

He had invited to his place one or two boon companions⁵⁶ he chanced to meet on the street. When he went home he found the cupboard was bare; and he hadn't a penny in his pockets – no uncommon plight for him. He had
 10 to make a quick decision. Excusing himself without a word, he went to the kitchen of a pawnbroker he knew well in a business way. When the servant stepped out, he took one of the brass pots, along with a roast of meat, and carried them home under his clothes. These he gives to his cook, orders her to pour the meat and broth at once into another pot, an earthenware one, and
 15 then to polish the pawnbroker's until it shines. When that's done he sends a boy to the pawnbroker with instructions to leave the pot as security and borrow two drachmas⁵⁷ on it, but to get a receipt that would prove such a pot had been sent. Not recognizing the pot, since it was polished and shining, the pawnbroker takes it as collateral, gives a receipt, and counts out the
 20 money. With the money the boy buys wine. That sufficed for the party.

When at last it's time to prepare the pawnbroker's lunch, the kettle is missing. He swears at the cook, who retorts to his accusations by declaring over and over that no one except Antony had been in the kitchen that day. To suspect a priest seemed improper, but finally they go to him and
 25 look around for the pot at his place. Not the slightest trace of it. I needn't elaborate: the priest was asked in all earnestness for the pot, because he was the only person who had entered the kitchen about the time it was missed. He admitted borrowing a pot but said he put it back where he took it from. When they disputed this and the argument grew heated, Antony, in the
 30 presence of witnesses, exclaimed, 'See how risky it is to do business with people these days without a receipt! I'd be on the verge of arrest for theft if I didn't have the pawnbroker's signature.' And he brought out the signed ticket. The trick was clear; the story was told throughout the neighbourhood with much amusement, that a pot had been left as security with its owner.
 35 Men are more indulgent towards tricks of this sort if they're played on unpopular persons, especially those who generally deceive others.

Adolesches Well, you've let loose a flood of stories by mentioning Antony, but I'll tell only one and that a short one I've just heard. Some hail-fellows-well-met, as they're called, whose main object in life is a laugh,
 40 were once having a party. Among them was Antony; also another man with the same sort of reputation and jealous of Antony. Now as philosophers,

- when they meet, are accustomed to propound some question about natural phenomena,⁵⁸ so here the question quickly came up, which was man's most honourable part?⁵⁹ One guessed the eyes, another the heart, another the brain, another something else, and each offered reasons for his surmise. Told
- 5 to give his opinion, Antony said he thought the mouth the most honourable part of all; and he added a reason, I'm not sure what. Then that other fellow, to avoid agreement with Antony, retorted that in his opinion the part we sit on was most honourable. Ridiculous as this seemed to everyone, he argued that priority in seating is commonly allowed to belong to the highest rank.
- 10 This honour belonged to the part he had named. They applauded this notion and had a good laugh. The man was pleased with his wit, and Antony seemed to be beaten in that contest. He dissembled: he had awarded highest honours to the mouth only because he knew the other, from envy of his reputation, would name a different part. Some days later, when they were
- 15 both guests at the same party again, Antony came across the envious chap talking with some others while they were waiting for dinner. Turning his back, Antony broke wind loudly in the other's face. 'Get out, you clown,' said the man angrily. 'Where did you learn those manners?' 'Angry, too, are you?' said Antony. 'Had I greeted you by word of mouth, you'd have
- 20 replied in the same way. Now I greet you with that part of the body which in your opinion is the most honourable of all and I'm called clown.' Thus did Antony recover his lost reputation.

We've all had our say. Now it remains for the judge to give his decision.

- Gelasinus** I'll do so, but not until everyone drains his cup. Look, here I go –
- 25 but a wolf enters the tale.⁶⁰

Polymythus Levinus Panagathus!⁶¹ He's not bad news.

Levinus What's been going on in such jolly company?

Polymythus Just a storytelling contest until the wolf – you – interrupted.

- Levinus** Then I'm here to finish the story: I want you all to come and have a
- 30 theological luncheon with me tomorrow.

Gelasinus You promise a Scythian⁶² feast!

Levinus That remains to be seen.⁶³ If you don't pronounce it more pleasant than a fabulous feast, I won't refuse to pay the penalty during the meal.⁶⁴ Nothing is more amusing than to treat nonsense seriously.⁶⁵

NOTES

- 1 Polymythus 'teller of many tales' (Erasmus?) is the host. Eutrapelus 'witty' is chosen 'king' or symposiarch, master of ceremonies, Horace's *arbiter bibendi* (*Odes* 2.7.25). Others present are Gelasinus 'jocular,' Asteus 'urbane,' Philythlus 'lover of nonsense,' Philogelos 'laughter-loving,' Euglottus 'fluent,' Lerochares

'joker,' Adollesches 'prater,' 'chatterbox': nine in all, nine being, as we have already learned ('The Profane Feast' n102) the approved number at a dinner party, though there was a proverb warning that seven made conviviality, nine contention (*Adagia* I iii 97). At this dinner a tenth, Levinus, who was unexpected, merely looks in at the end.

- 2 Greek in the original
- 3 As in ancient Rome. Cf Horace *Ars poetica* 343 and *Adagia* I v 60.
- 4 Because *novus* should be *nova* to agree in gender with *lex*
- 5 This sentence is Greek in the original.
- 6 *Quod felix faustumque sit*, an ancient formula uttered by 'our ancestors' before undertaking an enterprise, according to Cicero *De divinatione* 1.45.102
- 7 Its value in present-day money can only be guessed. Erasmus often uses the Greek silver drachma to indicate a coin of moderate value. Two drachmas are enough to buy some wine for a dinner of two or three persons (583:17–20 below), but wine was mixed with water when drunk.
- 8 On decorum see 'The Godly Feast' n200 and 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n56.
- 9 *nefastum convivium*; alluding to ancient *dies nefasti*, days on which legal judgments could not be pronounced or assemblies held. See *Adagia* III iv 64.
- 10 The mean, usually considered the safest course. See 'The Old Men's Chat' 451:38–9.
- 11 Vengeance or retribution
- 12 From paying their share
- 13 'Noisy,' an epithet used of Bacchus because of his patronage of loud and unruly celebrations or festivals
- 14 Brother and colleague of Rhadamanthus. They were judges in the underworld. On Rhadamanthus see 'Charon' n38.
- 15 The example is related by Plutarch *Moralia* 208B–C *Apophthegmata Laconica* and is in Erasmus *Apophthegmata* LB IV 93E–94A. Agesilaus lived 444–360 BC.
- 16 *architriclino*, meaning 'butler' or 'head waiter'; a Greek word in John 2:9 transliterated in the Vulgate
- 17 Synonymous with 'Lacedaemonian' or 'Spartan'
- 18 See Gellius 11.14 and Erasmus *Apophthegmata* LB IV 294E.
- 19 Plutarch *Moralia* 337F *De Alexandri Magni fortuna*; Erasmus *Apophthegmata* LB IV 356F
- 20 An old friend of Erasmus, who calls him 'Abstemius' in Allen II 1: heading and line 1, 2:11 / CWE Ep 1341A:2, 4, 22. See also 'The Godly Feast' introduction 172, 173 and 'A Fish Diet' n280.
- 21 Plautus *Mostellaria* 791; *Adagia* II ii 80
- 22 *bonis avibus*, a commonplace; *Adagia* I i 75
- 23 Therefore the more appropriate for Polymythus if he is Erasmus. See 'The Shipwreck' n32.
- 24 The name stands for a clown (Apuleius *Apologia* 81); origin obscure. Bataillon points out the resemblance of his pranks to those of Till Eulenspiegel ('Erasmé conteur' 100).
- 25 This story is retold, in what seems a direct borrowing from Erasmus' colloquy, in Adrianus Barlandus *Decorum . . . libri tres* (1529) d2. In his *Ortho-epia Gallica* (London 1593; STC 7454) M2 verso–4, John Eliot compressed the story and used it for a dialogue, in French and English, without acknowledgment to Erasmus

- and omitting the name of Maccus. Eliot's neglected book is an entertaining manual for teaching the French language to Englishmen. On Eliot see David H. Thomas 'John Eliot and Erasmus' *Erasmus in English* 9 (1978) 1–6.
- 26 *brabeum*. In 1 Cor 9:24 (Vulg), which may be the source of its use here, the word is spelled *bravium*. Erasmus replaced it with *praemium* in his own translation of the New Testament.
- 27 *legem Rhemiam*] The first edition of this colloquy had *legem Aquiliam*. The 'Aquilian law' refers to the formulae introduced by the renowned jurist Gaius Aquilius Gallo, a contemporary of Cicero, applicable to criminal fraud. Erasmus knew of it from Cicero *De officiis* 3.60–1, if not from other sources. But clearly Maccus cannot charge the shoemaker with criminal fraud. So *Aquiliam* was changed to *Rhemiam* in the next (February 1526) and subsequent editions, down to and including LB. The correct word is *Remmiam*, but *Rhemiam* misled many later annotators and translators (including, *proh dolor!* the present one) who took it to mean Rheims. The Remmian law, whose origins are uncertain, dealt with the offence of slander (*calumniā*). It provided severe penalties for any person who brought a charge against another which he knew to be false. See Cicero *Pro Roscio Amerino* 19.55.
- 28 A triviality, much ado about nothing; *Adagia* I iii 52
- 29 Erasmus was in school there from 1475 until 1484. See Allen I 579–82 Appendix 2.
- 30 Lent
- 31 Transliterated from two Greek words compounded
- 32 For this comment on philosophers see Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 5.3.7–9. It appears also in Erasmus *Apophthegmata* LB IV 347B.
- 33 *Mercurio favente natos*. Cf *Adagia* I i 72 and 'Patterns' n59; cf also *Adagia* IV vii 2: *Mercurio dextro*. Mercury is the patron of thieves; *Adagia* II i 85.
- 34 Probably he refers to 577:19–34 but possibly to 577:7–14.
- 35 The preceding paragraph, with its reference to Pythagoras
- 36 The Latin word is *pallium*, which cannot mean in this context the pallium – a circular band with pendent strips – worn on certain liturgical occasions only by popes and archbishops. Because it is here 'the outermost garment worn by a priest celebrating mass,' it must be a chasuble. In less formal usage it can mean merely a cloak or mantle. Even if the trickster were ignorant of the difference between pallium and chasuble in ecclesiastical usage, the priest to whom he is speaking could not be mistaken in such a matter. Or is feigned ignorance part of the joke, since this shameless fellow who talks glibly about a pallium is after all clever enough to make off with the priest's purse?
- John Whitgift, the Cambridge divine who became archbishop of Canterbury (1583–1604), alludes to this story, naming Erasmus' *Colloquies*, in *The Defense of the Aunswere to the Admonition, against the Replie of Thomas Cartwright* (1574); see *Works* ed J. Ayre, ps 46–8, 3 vols (Cambridge 1851–3) III 320.
- 37 Referring to the gold chain from heaven to earth that Zeus speaks of in the *Iliad* 8.19–27. Gelasinus means a line of corruption – graft – in the bureaucracy.
- 38 In all his writings on such topics Erasmus stresses the urgency of a king's being one 'who by law and justice looks out for the welfare of his people, not of himself' ('Things and Names' 811:4–5). See *Adagia* I iii 1, II v 1, II viii 65, III vii

1, IV i 1, and *Querela pacis*. He does not evade the question of what is to be done when a ruler, disregarding law and justice, becomes tyrannical; see 'The Godly Feast' 184:33–185:25 with the notes.

39 In ancient Rome

40 See *Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 577D–578A / ASD IV-1 164:892–165:4 / Born 175–6 / CWE 27 233.

41 Of this feast

42 While still dauphin Louis lived for five years (1456–61) at the castle of Genappe, south of Brussels in Brabant. At that time Brabant, like most of modern Belgium, was part of the grand duchy of Burgundy. So was Holland in Erasmus' childhood. Louis became king of France in 1461 after the death of his father, Charles VII. After Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, was defeated by the Swiss in 1477, Louis tried to get possession of the Netherlands, but the marriage of Mary of Burgundy, daughter and heiress of Charles the Bold, to the archduke Maximilian in 1477 brought about a struggle between France and the Hapsburgs for control of the Netherlands. Louis died in 1483. Not until 1493 was Maximilian able to establish securely the Hapsburg dominance there. Louis XI had seized, and France kept, the Burgundian territories in France itself, but the Low Countries were to remain part of the Holy Roman Empire and under Hapsburg rule long after the lifetime of Erasmus.

Records of Louis XI's life and deeds are said to be more copious than those of any monarch before the sixteenth century. Since he died only a dozen years before Erasmus moved to Paris in 1495, stories about the king must have been plentiful. These could have come to Erasmus' attention as easily by report as by reading. For one interesting possibility see Elsbeth Gutmann *Die Colloquia familiaria des Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Basel and Stuttgart 1968) 60–1. Wherever he found them, Erasmus put the stories to good use.

On Louis and his times see Paul Murray Kendall *Louis XI* (New York 1971), with extensive bibliography; Denys Hay *Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (London 1966); P.S. Lewis *Later Medieval France* (London 1968); on Burgundy, J. Huizinga *The Waning of the Middle Ages* trans F. Hopman (London 1924); C.A.J. Armstrong *England, France and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century* (London 1983).

43 Of which he was notoriously fond

44 If 120 crowns was the income of 'a well-to-do country squire' in Louis XI's France (Kendall *Louis XI* [n42 above] 92), we infer that the sum awarded to Conon may have grown proportionately as great, in the life of the legend, as the turnip itself. This is all we need to know about Conon's reward: it was immense.

This story of king, peasant, and turnip (in some versions a radish) circulated in the thirteenth century in a Latin poem, *Rapularius*, of which there was also a later version, perhaps of the fourteenth century. The medieval *Rapularius* is familiar to many because it was retold in abbreviated form in a famous collection, Grimms' *Fairy Tales* (no 146). Erasmus' story follows the first part of *Rapularius* but with some changes; for instance the poem does not name Louis or Conon. It tells of a poor peasant trying to eke out a living from his few acres. He grows a turnip so big that when he decides to take it to the king it fills a wagon drawn by four oxen. The king, pleased with the gift, loads him

with riches. The principal differences between the poem and Erasmus' tale are that in the poem the envious courtier who tries to duplicate the peasant's luck is his wealthy brother, and that Erasmus ignores the second part of the story. In that part the courtier presents costly gifts to the king, who, by advice of his queen, rewards him with the turnip. Enraged, the courtier seeks revenge by trying to have his brother murdered. But when his hirelings are interrupted in their attempt to kill the brother they tie him in a sack instead and hoist him up in a tree, whence he contrives to escape. This second part of the tale is only loosely connected with the first. If Erasmus knew of it he did well to omit it, since it does nothing for his delineation of the king's character and impairs the unity of the narrative.

On *Rapularius* see Bataillon 'Erasme conteur' 90-4; for the text an edition by Karl Langosch, *Sammlung mittellateinischen Texte* 10 (Heidelberg 1929) 46-108.

45 *Adagia* I ix 30; see 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' n6.

46 *Adagia* I x 14

47 *ut ansa ansam*; cf *Adagia* I iv 4.

48 This anecdote too has a long history. When Agesilaus, king of the Lacedaemonians, was standing at the altar of Pallas, about to sacrifice, he was bitten by a louse, which he killed. He did not say, like Louis XI, that the incident showed he was human but that he was pleased to kill a plotter lying in wait at the very altar (Plutarch *Moralia* 208E *Apophthegmata Laconica*).

49 Cf *Adagia* I i 61 and II iii 77.

50 From Horace *Satires* 2.5.56; *Adagia* I vii 15

51 German king from 1486, Holy Roman Emperor 1493-1519; 'our' because Erasmus' Holland was now part of the empire. Maximilian I was the hero of a considerable oral tradition even in his lifetime, and many anecdotes testify to his political shrewdness; yet he was reckless in financial matters. See Glen E. Waas *The Legendary Character of Kaiser Maximilian* (New York 1941), who includes the story preserved by Erasmus but has nothing about a specific source (148). Elsewhere Erasmus speaks of Maximilian as 'a keen judge of men' (Allen Ep 1323:36-7 / CWE Ep 1323:41-2).

From April 1529 to September 1531 Erasmus lived in a fine house in Freiburg im Breisgau built for Maximilian, who, however, never took possession of it. See Allen Ep 2462 introduction.

52 Although the young man kept 20,000 of the 50,000 additional florins collected - *extorsit* is the word for 'squeezed' and is doubtless appropriate - he had only one chance to make this profit. The agents who did the same sort of thing regularly are shown to be hypocritical in voicing pretended indignation at his behaviour.

53 *Adagia* I vii 29; cf 'The Profane Feast' n107.

54 Of this priest of Louvain nothing is known for certain, but see Bataillon 'Erasme conteur' 96 n32, where a priest named Antoine Haneron is named as a possible model.

55 Duke of Burgundy 1419-67, father of Charles the Bold and grandfather of Maximilian I. On his fondness for jokes and games see Bataillon 'Erasme conteur' 96-7.

- 56 *unum atque alterum bellum homunculum*; cf *belli homunculi* at line 39 below. The phrase is borrowed from Gellius 13.11.3.
- 57 See n7 above.
- 58 Such questions as those treated in two later colloquies, 'Sympathy' and 'A Problem'
- 59 With the ribald story that follows compare a similar one in *Apophthegmata* LB IV 341E about Crates the Cynic.
- 60 The following lines recall superstitions well known in folklore. 'A wolf enters the tale' alludes to a sudden interruption, actual or feigned, welcome or unwelcome; compare 'Speak of the devil and he'll appear.' See *Adagia* II viii 6: *Etiam si lupi meminisses*, III viii 56: *Lupus in fabula*. Another superstition was that the sudden appearance of a wolf deprives the beholders of speech. Erasmus tells us this legend may have been due to nurses who disciplined their charges by frightening them with such stories. Or there may be some connection with tales of Romulus and Remus being suckled by a wolf. However that may be, it is a fact, Erasmus adds, that when somebody of whom we were speaking appears suddenly we fall silent, embarrassed to say in his presence what we would not hesitate to say in his absence (*Adagia* IV v 50: *Lupus in fabula*). Still another adage may be even more relevant here, I vii 86: *Lupi illum priores viderunt* 'The wolves have seen him first' (an echo of Virgil *Eclogues* 9.54; see Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.80). Polymythus jokingly implies as much. Levinus saw them first and they are struck dumb; therefore the party must come to an end, though in fact it was ending anyway. Nor had Levinus been mentioned. Tomorrow is another day, however, and Levinus himself will be host. We hear nothing more of the promised 'theological luncheon,' but theological and religious topics are discussed in 'A Fish Diet,' 'The Funeral,' 'The Sermon' and 'The Seraphic Funeral.' Whatever else it provided, a theological luncheon would have plenty of good wine (*Adagia* III ii 37).
- 61 This is Lieven Algoet of Ghent, one of Erasmus' servant-pupils; see 'Patterns' n33. His nickname 'Panagathus, 'perfectly' or 'absolutely' good, inspires Erasmus to caution him to live up to such a name (Allen Ep 1091:40-8 / CWE Ep 1091:44-52). On Algoet see further the introduction to Allen Ep 1091 and CEBR. He is not to be confused with Levinus Ammonius, a Carthusian admirer of Erasmus ('The Soldier and the Carthusian' introduction 328). For an odd bit of verse, a chronogram on Erasmus by Algoet, see LB I *** ** 3.
- 62 A common term for behaviour or customs that are disorderly and uncivilized. 'More barbaric than a Scythian' (*De copia* CWE 24 385:12-13) is typical. See *Adagia* II iii 17.
- 63 Greek in the original; *Adagia* III iv 49
- 64 By drinking healths to the guests. Cf 'The Profane Feast' 147:4-11.
- 65 As Erasmus writes in the dedicatory preface of *Moriae encomium*, addressed to More (Allen Ep 222:51-2 / CWE Ep 222:57-9 / CWE 27 84). Cf Horace *Ars poetica* 451.

THE NEW MOTHER

Puerpera

First printed in the February 1526 edition.

Though the combining of advice on nursing a baby with an exposition of the nature of the soul may seem an unpromising scheme for a dialogue, sixteenth-century readers would have found these two subjects less incongruous than many modern readers may think them. The question whether a mother ought to nurse her own child had a long history behind it, and doctrines of the soul were not so unfamiliar or so frightening to educated readers, at least to those who read Erasmus' books, as they may seem now.

To Erasmus and his readers such topics and their relationships were pertinent because they were both traditional and speculative, legacies of habit, of moral philosophy, and of what is now called psychology, a discipline which takes its name from ancient inquiry about the psyche or soul, though Aristotle himself did not use the word 'psychology.' No matter if confident pronouncements on infant care in this colloquy come from the lifelong bachelor who also wrote on courtship, marriage, and feminism: what Erasmus thought he knew about such things he had learned by shrewd observation and reflection on human experience, as that is found in literature and in histories. The topics he discusses in this colloquy could be made desperately dull if treated pedantically, without the conversational ease with which they are presented. His manner gives them immediacy, showing their interest and importance by the wit, informality, and candour of the dialogue. Pediatrics and psychology become plausible because Eutrapelus and Fabulla are convincing characters.

Nearly everything Eutrapelus tells the young mother, Fabulla, about nursing her child can be found in the time-honoured precepts of the essay formerly ascribed to Plutarch on bringing up children, *De liberis educandis* 5 (*Moralia* 3C-F), and in Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* 12.1. Both were favourite authors of Erasmus. Their counsel on children became common literary property, though even in antiquity startling dissent from such opinions as theirs is evident in Plato's *Republic*. In his ideal state children of the governing class or guardians are not nursed by their mothers but are handed over at birth to nurses unknown to the mothers; these women are, however, very carefully selected and must be of sound character (*Republic* 5.460C). In Renaissance literature Plutarch's advice – that if a nurse is necessary she must be a woman of unquestioned health and virtue – is repeated as an obvious truth. That it was emphasized, however obvious, suggests that it was needed. Vives in

De institutione feminae christianae (2.11; *Opera omnia* IV 257–8) and Elyot in *The Governour* (1.4) call attention to it. In More's commonwealth, which in this respect differs from Plato's, every mother nurses her own child (*Utopia* Yale CWM 4 142, 143). Few sixteenth-century writers stressed the point more than Erasmus does in 'The New Mother.' For other references see his *De conscribendis epistolis* (LB I 355A–B / ASD I-2 238:16–22 / CWE 25 29); *De ratione studii* (LB I 526A / ASD I-2 133:10 / CWE 24 680); *De pueris instituendis* (LB I 498F–499A / ASD I-2 43:10–15 / CWE 26 315); *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (LB V 710A–B).

Eutrapelus' instruction on the soul is borrowed from Aristotle's *De anima*. This part of his visit is something Fabulla had not expected, but she is patient and polite about it and soon becomes genuinely interested.

A Spanish translation of *Puerpera* by Alonso Ruiz de Virués was printed in 1529 (*Bataillon Erasme et l'Espagne* xxix, 321).

EUTRAPELUS, FABULLA¹

Eutrapelus Greetings, my dear Fabulla.

Fabulla Greetings in plenty to you too, Eutrapelus. But what in the world
5 finally brings you here to say hello for a change? We haven't seen you these three years.

Eutrapelus I'll tell you. As I happened to pass by this house, I saw a crow tied with a white cloth and I wondered what the reason was.²

Fabulla Are you such a stranger in this neighbourhood that you didn't
10 know this is a sign of a birth in the house?

Eutrapelus Oh-ho, isn't it a marvel to see a white crow? But joking aside, of course I knew that; only I couldn't believe that you, a girl scarcely past her sixteenth year, had learned so early the very difficult art of bearing children, which some women scarcely learn before they're thirty.

15 **Fabulla** How you always live up to your name, Eutrapelus!

Eutrapelus How Fabulla is never at a loss for fables! – So it was lucky for me, while I was wondering about this, that Polygamus turned up.³

Fabulla The man who recently buried his tenth wife?

Eutrapelus The very one. But what you missed, I suppose, is that he's
20 eagerly courting a girl again as though he'd been a bachelor up to now. When I asked him what the news was, 'In this house,' says he, 'a woman's body was cut in two.' 'For what crime?' 'If the common gossip is true,' says he, 'a wife tried to skin her husband,'⁴ and off he went with a laugh.

Fabulla That fellow has a crude sense of humour.

25 **Eutrapelus** I'm coming straight inside to congratulate you on a happy delivery.

Fabulla Congratulate me on a safe delivery if you like, Eutrapelus; on a happy one when you see my offspring prove himself an honest man.

Eutrapelus Dutifully and truly spoken, my Fabulla.

Fabulla I'm nobody's Fabulla except Petronius'.

5 **Eutrapelus** Yes, you bear only for Petronius, but you don't live only for him, I dare say. I congratulate you further on having produced a boy.

Fabulla But why do you think it's luckier to have had a boy than a girl?

Eutrapelus Nay, Petronius' Fabulla (for now I'm afraid to say *my* Fabulla), *you* tell me why you're glad to have boys rather than girls.

10 **Fabulla** How other women may feel I don't know; for my part, I'm pleased now to have had a boy because it was God's will. Had he willed me to have a girl, I would have preferred it too.

Eutrapelus Do you imagine God has so much leisure that he even attends women in labour?

15 **Fabulla** What could he better do, Eutrapelus, than preserve by propagation what he created?

Eutrapelus What could he do, my good woman?⁵ On the contrary, if he weren't God I don't think he could get through so much business. King Christian of Denmark, a devout partisan of the gospel, is in exile.⁶ Francis, king of France, is a 'guest' of the Spaniards.⁷ What he thinks of this I don't know, but surely he's a man worthy of a better fate. Charles is preparing to extend the boundaries of his realm.⁸ Ferdinand has his hands full in Germany.⁹ Bankruptcy¹⁰ threatens every court. The peasants¹¹ raise dangerous riots and are not swayed from their purpose, despite so many
25 massacres. The commons are bent on anarchy; the church is shaken to its very foundations by menacing factions;¹² on every side the seamless coat of Jesus is torn to shreds.¹³ The vineyard of the Lord is now laid waste not by a single boar,¹⁴ but at one and the same time the authority of priests (together with their tithes),¹⁵ the dignity of theologians, the splendour of monks is
30 imperilled; confession totters; vows reel;¹⁶ pontifical ordinances crumble away; the Eucharist is called in question;¹⁷ Antichrist is awaited;¹⁸ the whole earth is pregnant with I know not what calamity. The Turks conquer and threaten all the while; there's nothing they won't ravage if their undertaking succeeds.¹⁹ And you ask what could he better do? No, it's high time, I think,
35 for him to look out for his own kingdom too.²⁰

Fabulla What men think most urgent may seem insignificant to God. But let's exclude God from this cast, if you will. Tell me: what are your reasons for believing it's more fortunate to have had a lad than a lass?²¹

40 **Eutrapelus** It's a duty to consider this the best because God, who is beyond question best, gave it. Now if God gave you a crystal cup, wouldn't you thank him heartily?

Fabulla I would.

Eutrapelus What if he gave one of glass? You wouldn't thank him so much, would you? – But I fear I'm a bother instead of a comfort, wrangling over these questions here with you.

5 **Fabulla** Not at all. Fabulla's in no danger from fables. I've been in bed a month now and I'm strong enough to wrestle.

Eutrapelus Then why don't you fly out of the nest?

Fabulla The king forbade.

Eutrapelus King who?

10 **Fabulla** A tyrant, rather.

Eutrapelus Who, I ask?

Fabulla In a word, custom.²²

Eutrapelus Ah, how many unjust demands that king makes! – Let's go on discussing crystal and glass, then.

15 **Fabulla** I suppose you think man is naturally better and stronger than woman.

Eutrapelus So I believe.

Fabulla On the authority of men, to be sure. Men aren't therefore longer lived than women, are they? Not immune to disease?

20 **Eutrapelus** Not at all, but they generally excel in strength.

Fabulla But they themselves are excelled by camels.

Eutrapelus Well, but the male was created first.

Fabulla Adam was created before Christ. And artists usually surpass themselves in their later works.²³

25 **Eutrapelus** But God made woman subject to man.

Fabulla A ruler's not better merely because he's a ruler. And it's the wife, not the female, whom God made subject. Besides, he made the wife subject in such a way that, though each has power over the other, nevertheless the woman is to obey the man not as a superior but a more aggressive person.

30 Tell me, Eutrapelus, which is weaker, the one who makes concession to the other or the one to whom concession is made?

Eutrapelus I'll yield to you in this if you'll show me what Paul means in his letter to the Corinthians when he says the head of the man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man; and when he says man is the image and glory

35 of God, woman the glory of man.²⁴

Fabulla I'll explain that if you'll show me whether it's granted to men only to be members of Christ.²⁵

Eutrapelus Heaven forbid! That's granted to all human creatures through faith.

40 **Fabulla** How does it happen, then, that since there is one head this is not shared by all members alike? In the next place, since God created man in

his own image, did he express this image in man's bodily form or in mental gifts?

Eutrapelus In mental gifts.

Fabulla But in these respects what superiority, pray, have men over us? In
5 which sex is there more drunkenness, more brawls, fights, killings, wars, robberies, and adulteries?

Eutrapelus But only we men go to war for our country.

Fabulla But quite often you same men desert your post and run away shamefully. And it's not always for your country, but more commonly for
10 a paltry pittance, that you desert wife and children.²⁶ You're worse than gladiators: you voluntarily surrender your bodies into the slavish necessity of killing or being killed. Now – though you make a special point of boasting of your martial valour – there's not a single one of you who, if he once experienced childbirth, would not prefer standing in a battle line ten times
15 over to going through what we must endure so often. Battle doesn't always reach the stage of hand-to-hand fighting, and even if it does, not every part of the army is in danger. Your kind are stationed in the middle line; another man is in the reserves; another stays safely in the rear;²⁷ and finally many are saved by surrender and flight. We must engage death at close
20 quarters.²⁸

Eutrapelus Not the first time I've heard this – but is it true?

Fabulla Yes, very true.

Eutrapelus Then, Fabulla, would you like me to persuade your husband not to touch you hereafter?²⁹ With that sort of bargain, you'll be safe from this
25 danger.

Fabulla Yes, indeed, I'd like nothing better if you could do it.

Eutrapelus What reward will this negotiator have if he succeeds?

Fabulla I'll give you ten smoked calves' tongues.

Eutrapelus I'd prefer them to ten nightingales' tongues.³⁰ I don't reject the
30 terms, but I wouldn't want this agreement ratified before a guarantee is inserted.

Fabulla Add it, if you like – and any other covenant.

Eutrapelus I will, depending on how you feel about it after one month.

Fabulla Why not on how I feel now?

Eutrapelus I'll tell you: because I'm afraid that after a month you may not
35 feel the same. So you'd have to pay me double, and I'd have the double job of persuading and dissuading.

Fabulla Well, be it as you wish. But meantime go on with your demonstration of why the male sex is superior to the female.

Eutrapelus I see you're bent on single combat. For that reason I think I'd
40 better yield for the present. I'll engage you at some other time, but fully

armed with an auxiliary – for where wars are fought with words, not even seven men are a match for one woman.

Fabulla Yes, Nature armed us with this weapon, though even you men aren't tongue-tied.

5 **Eutrapelus** Maybe so. But where's your little boy?

Fabulla In the next room.

Eutrapelus What's he doing there? Cooking cabbage?

Fabulla Are you trying to be funny? He's with his nurse.

Eutrapelus What nurse are you talking about? Has he any other nurse than
10 his mother?³¹

Fabulla Why not? It's common custom.³²

Eutrapelus You name the worst authority on good behaviour, the common herd, Fabulla. Sinning is common, gambling is common, visiting brothels is common; cheating, boozing, folly are common.

15 **Fabulla** My friends advised it because they thought a person as young as I am should be spared nursing.

Eutrapelus But if Nature gave you strength to conceive, undoubtedly it gave you strength to nurse, too.

Fabulla Yes, probably.

20 **Eutrapelus** Tell me: don't you think the word 'mother' is very sweet?

Fabulla I do.

Eutrapelus So if it were possible, you'd allow some other woman to be mother of your offspring?

Fabulla Not for the world!

25 **Eutrapelus** Then why are you willing to transfer more than half the name of mother to some other woman?

Fabulla Do mind what you're saying, Eutrapelus. I'm not dividing my son. I'm his sole, entire mother.

Eutrapelus No, Fabulla, Nature herself contradicts you on that score. Why
30 is earth called the universal parent? Because it produces so much? Not at all; the real reason is that it nourishes what it brought forth. What water begets is reared in water. On land no kind of animal or plant is produced which that same land does not nourish by its own vitality. And there's no class of living creatures that does not nurse its own young. Owls, lions, and vipers
35 bring up their own offspring; and do men reject theirs? I ask you, what is more cruel than those who are said to expose their children because bringing them up is a nuisance?

Fabulla Horrid!

40 **Eutrapelus** But people don't find the deed equally horrid. Or isn't it a kind of exposure to hand over the tender infant, still red from its mother, drawing breath from its mother, crying for its mother's care – a sound said to move

even wild beasts – to a woman who perhaps has neither good health³³ nor good morals and who, finally, may be such more concerned about a bit of money than about your whole baby?

Fabulla The woman chosen is in sound health.

- 5 **Eutrapelus** Physicians would be better judges of this than you are. But assume she's equal to you in this respect, or better, if you like. Do you suppose it makes no difference whether a delicate infant drinks in congenial and familiar nourishment and is cherished by the now familiar warmth or is forced to get used to somebody else's?³⁴ Wheat sown in alien soil
10 degenerates into wild oats³⁵ or winter wheat; a vine transferred to a different hill changes its character; a young plant torn from its parent earth droops and dies, as it were, and for that reason it is transplanted with native earth if possible.

- Fabulla** On the contrary, they say plants that are transplanted and grafted
15 lose their wildness and bear better fruit.

- Eutrapelus** But not as soon as they're born, my friend. This time too will come some day, if God will, when you must send the boy out from home to learn his letters – and harder lessons, which are the father's responsibility rather than the mother's. Now his tender age should be
20 cherished. Furthermore, while the nature of the food contributes much to bodily health and strength, this is especially true of the nourishment a soft and delicate little body is filled with. Here also Horace's saying applies: 'Once steeped when new, the jar its fragrance long will keep.'³⁶

- Fabulla** I'm not worried so much about his body if only his mind will be the
25 sort we hope for.

Eutrapelus Dutifully spoken, but dubious wisdom.

Fabulla Why?

- Eutrapelus** When you chop cabbage, why do you complain that the blade of the knife is dull and order it sharpened? Why reject a needle with a blunt
30 point when that alone does not deprive you of skill?

Fabulla The skill's not lacking, but an unsatisfactory tool hinders it.

Eutrapelus Why do people who need keen eyesight avoid tares³⁷ and onions?

Fabulla Because they harm the eyes.

- 35 **Eutrapelus** Isn't it the mind that perceives?

Fabulla Yes, for dead men see nothing. But what would a carpenter do with a bad axe?

Eutrapelus You admit, then, that the body is the instrument of the mind?³⁸

Fabulla It is.

- 40 **Eutrapelus** And you grant that if the body's injured, the mind doesn't function or functions awkwardly?

Fabulla What you say is not far from the truth.

Eutrapelus Well, now, I seem to have met with a philosophical nature. So assume that the soul of a man transmigrates into the body of a cock:³⁹ would the cock speak like us?

5 **Fabulla** Of course not.

Eutrapelus Why wouldn't it?

Fabulla Because it lacks lips, teeth, and tongue like ours, and it has neither epiglottis nor the three cartilages moved by the three muscles to which the nerves from the brain extend, nor throat nor mouth like ours.

10 **Eutrapelus** What if it entered into the body of a swine?⁴⁰

Fabulla It would grunt like a swine.

Eutrapelus Into the body of a camel?

Fabulla It would sing as a camel sings.

Eutrapelus Into the body of an ass, as happened to Apuleius?⁴¹

15 **Fabulla** It would bray like an ass, I suppose.

Eutrapelus Yes, and he says that when he wanted to call out to Caesar, with his lips as tight together as possible, he could scarcely sound an 'O'; he simply couldn't utter 'Caesar.' The same fellow, when he wanted to write down a story he had heard before it slipped from his mind, rejected so asinine an idea when he noticed his thick hoofs.

Fabulla Properly, too.

Eutrapelus Therefore when eyes are bleary, the mind perceives less; when ears are filled with dirt, it hears less; when you have a cold in the head, it smells less; when a limb is stiff, it feels less; when the tongue is infected by
25 ill humours, it tastes less.

Fabulla Undeniably.

Eutrapelus And the sole reason is that the organ is faulty.

Fabulla I think so.

Eutrapelus You won't deny it's often injured by food and drink.

30 **Fabulla** Granted, but what has this to do with a clear head?

Eutrapelus In the same way, what have tares to do with keen eyesight?

Fabulla They damage the instrument of the mind.

Eutrapelus Well answered. But explain this: Why is it that one person has a quicker understanding than another and a more tenacious memory? That
35 one gets angry sooner or hates more moderately?

Fabulla It's the way his mind's made.

Eutrapelus You shan't escape like that. Why is it that one who was formerly quick and alert and had a fine memory afterwards becomes forgetful and slow, either from a blow or an accident or disease or old age?

40 **Fabulla** Now you seem to play the sophist.

Eutrapelus Do the same for your own part: play the sophistress.⁴²

Fabulla I suppose you mean that just as the mind perceives and hears through eyes and ears, so it understands, remembers, loves, hates, grows angry, and is appeased through certain organs.

Eutrapelus Quite correct.

- 5 **Fabulla** Just what are these organs, and where are they?

Eutrapelus You see where the eyes are.

Fabulla I know where the ears, nostrils, and palate are too. And I perceive that the sense of touch pervades the entire body except when a member is numb.

- 10 **Eutrapelus** When a foot's cut off, the mind still understands.

Fabulla It does, and likewise if a hand is cut off.

Eutrapelus But one who is struck hard on the temple or on the back of the head falls down as though dead and is completely unconscious.

Fabulla I've seen that sometimes.

- 15 **Eutrapelus** From this you conclude that the organs of intellect, will, and memory are within the skull, less gross than eyes and ears but material none the less. Though the extremely rarefied spirits⁴³ in our bodies are substantial, too.

Fabulla Are these also injured by food and drink?

- 20 **Eutrapelus** Certainly.

Fabulla But the brain is far away from the stomach.

Eutrapelus So is the top of the chimney far from the fireplace, but if you sit on it you'll feel the heat.

Fabulla I shan't try it.

- 25 **Eutrapelus** But if you don't believe me, ask the storks. And so it does make a difference which spirits and vapours⁴⁴ fly up from the stomach to the brain and to the organs of the mind. For if these are crude and cool, they sink back into the stomach.

- 30 **Fabulla** You're really describing a still by which we draw off the juice evaporating from flowers and herbs.

- Eutrapelus** Not a bad guess. For the liver, to which the gall bladder is attached, serves as a fire, the stomach as a pan, the skull as the cap of the tube;⁴⁵ and in the same fashion, if you like, the nose serves as the lead pipes. And so from this mutual flowing back and forth of the humours is generally produced
35 whatever diseases there are, as one humour or another slips down now into the eyes, now into the stomach, at another time into the shoulders, sometimes into the neck or elsewhere.⁴⁶ To make this more intelligible: why do intemperate wine-drinkers have poor memories? Why are those who feed on foods containing the lighter spirits less dull-witted? Why does coriander improve
40 the memory?⁴⁷ Why does hellebore empty the mind?⁴⁸ Why does frantic cramming of oneself bring on an epilepsy that numbs all the senses at once,

like a deep sleep? In short, as unusual hunger or thirst weakens boys' wits and memory,⁴⁹ so overeating makes them stupid (if we believe Aristotle):⁵⁰ the tiny spark of reason is buried, so to speak, by the stuff heaped upon it.

Fabulla Is the mind corporeal, then, that it should be affected by corporeal things?

Eutrapelus The nature of the rational mind is not itself corrupted, but its power and activity are weakened if the organs are injured; as an artist's skill is useless if he's deprived of proper tools.

Fabulla How big is the mind and what does it look like?

Eutrapelus Ridiculous to ask about size or shape when you admit it's without body.

Fabulla I take 'body' to mean what is perceptible.

Eutrapelus Yes, but the imperceptible is the most perfect, as for example God and the angels.⁵¹

Fabulla I hear God and the angels called spirits. But we perceive a spirit.

Eutrapelus In this expression Sacred Scripture speaks obscurely, in consideration of human simplicity. It means mind free from all connection with objects of sense.

Fabulla Then what's the difference between angel and mind?⁵²

Eutrapelus The same as between slug and snail, or tortoise, if you prefer.

Fabulla Then the body is the dwelling rather than the instrument of mind.

Eutrapelus There's nothing to prevent us from calling the instrument attached a 'dwelling.' And in fact philosophers have different opinions on this subject. Some say the body is the 'garment' of the soul,⁵³ some the 'dwelling,' some the 'instrument,' some the 'harmony.'⁵⁴ Whichever of these names you use, it follows that acts of mind are curtailed by states of the body. In the first place, if body bears the same relation to mind as a garment does to a body, Hercules demonstrated how much difference a garment makes to bodily strength⁵⁵ – to say nothing of colours or kinds of hair and skin. But as to whether the same soul suffices for wearing out many bodies, as a body wears out many garments – that's up to Pythagoras.⁵⁶

Fabulla It would be convenient if, along with Pythagoras, we could change bodies as we do clothes, so that in winter we would assume a fat, well-lined body, in summer a lighter and thinner one.

Eutrapelus But it would be inconvenient, in my opinion, if, as we finally wear out the body after wearing out many clothes, the soul in like manner finally grew old and disappeared after wearing out many bodies.

Fabulla Obviously that wouldn't do.

Eutrapelus Now as the kind of clothing worn makes a difference to the body's health and nimbleness, so does the kind of body a soul carries about make a difference.

Fabulla Well, if body is the garment of soul, I see many men dressed in quite different ways.

Eutrapelus Yes, and yet something of how comfortably the soul is clothed depends on us.

5 **Fabulla** Enough talk of dress. Say something about the dwelling.

Eutrapelus But that what I say may not seem an idle tale to you, Fabulla, the Lord Jesus himself calls his body a 'temple,'⁵⁷ and the apostle Peter calls his body a 'tabernacle.'⁵⁸ There were people who called the body the 'tomb' of the soul, taking *σῶμα* as if it were *σῆμα*;⁵⁹ others have called it the
10 'prison of the mind'; some the 'garrison,' as if it were an armed citadel.⁶⁰ The pure in heart inhabit a temple; the minds of those not held captive by bodily passions dwell in a tent, ready to spring forth if the commander summons.⁶¹ Men so utterly blinded by foul sins that they never seek to breathe the air of gospel freedom have buried minds. But those who struggle
15 grievously against sins, so far without avail, have a mind imprisoned, a mind calling repeatedly upon the redeemer of all men, 'Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name, O Lord.'⁶² Those who struggle earnestly with Satan, watchful and on guard against the wiles of him who walketh about as a lion seeking whom he may devour⁶³ – their mind is
20 in a garrison which it is not lawful to leave without the commander's permission.

Fabulla If body is the dwelling place of mind, I observe many whose minds are ill housed.

Eutrapelus Yes, namely in houses dripping, dark, and exposed to every
25 wind, smoky, damp, damaged, dilapidated – in short, rotten and infected. And yet Cato holds that to be comfortably housed is the first requirement for happiness.⁶⁴

Fabulla There would be no complaint if moving into another dwelling were allowed.

30 **Eutrapelus** To depart is not permitted except when the landlord⁶⁵ bids. But even if we aren't allowed to leave, we *are* allowed to make the dwelling of our minds more habitable through our skill and care, just as in houses the windows are changed, floor raised, walls plastered or hung with tapestries, dirt got rid of by fire and fumigation. In an old body on the verge of ruin,
35 this is very difficult. What matters most is that the youthful body receive proper care from the minute it's born.

Fabulla You want the mother to be a medical nurse, too.

Eutrapelus Certainly I'd have her be so with regard to choice and regulation of food and drink, movement, sleep, baths, oilings, rubbings, clothing. How
40 many persons are there, do you think, who are liable to the most serious diseases and defects – epilepsy, emaciation, feebleness, deafness, ruptures,

crooked limbs, weak-mindedness, stupidity – for no other reason than careless treatment by nurses?

Fabulla I'm surprised you didn't become a Franciscan instead of a painter, you preach so eloquently.⁶⁶

5 **Eutrapelus** When I see you a Poor Clare,⁶⁷ then I'll preach to you as a Franciscan.

Fabulla I should very much like to know what *is* the soul of which we hear and talk so much, when nobody has seen it.

Eutrapelus On the contrary, nobody with eyes can miss it.

10 **Fabulla** I see souls painted in the form of little children.⁶⁸ But why no wings, as angels have?

Eutrapelus Because, if Socrates' story⁶⁹ is to be believed, when souls came down from heaven their wings were broken.

Fabulla Then how can they be said to fly up to heaven?

15 **Eutrapelus** Because faith and charity cause their wings to sprout again. These wings he sought who, wearied of the habitation of his body, cried, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest.'⁷⁰ For the soul has no other wings, since it is incorporeal, nor has it any shape visible to bodily eyes; but what we see by our minds we perceive with the
20 greater certitude. Do you believe there is a God?

Fabulla Of course.

Eutrapelus But nothing is more impossible to see than God.

Fabulla He is seen in the creation.⁷¹

Eutrapelus Likewise is the mind seen by its activity. If you want to know
25 what happens in a living body, consider a dead one. When you see a man feel, perceive, hear, be moved, understand, remember, reason, you perceive the presence of the soul more certainly than you now see this tankard. One sense can be mistaken; so much evidence of the senses cannot be wrong.

Fabulla If you can't show me a soul, then, describe it by some marks, as
30 though you wanted to describe the emperor, whom I've never seen.

Eutrapelus Aristotle's definition springs to mind.⁷²

Fabulla What is it? For he's said to be an excellent describer of everything.

Eutrapelus 'Soul is the actuality of a natural organic body potentially having life.'⁷³

35 **Fabulla** Why does he call it 'actuality' rather than a journey or a passage?

Eutrapelus He's not concerned here with drivers or riders but with defining the property of the soul. Form, whose nature is to act, he calls actuality, whereas the property of matter is to be acted upon. Now every natural movement of the body originates in mind; yet a body moves in different
40 ways.

Fabulla I understand. But why does he add 'organic'?

Eutrapelus Because the soul does nothing except through the organs, that is, the instruments of the body.

Fabulla But why does he add 'natural'?

Eutrapelus Because a Daedalus⁷⁴ would fashion such a body in vain.

5 **Therefore** the definition adds, 'potentially having life.' Form does not act on anything whatever but on susceptible substance.

Fabulla What if an angel occupied a human body?⁷⁵

Eutrapelus He would act, but not through the natural organs; nor would he give life to the body if soul were absent.

10 **Fabulla** Have I now a complete explanation of the soul?⁷⁶

Eutrapelus You have Aristotle's.

Fabulla Well, I've heard he's a famous philosopher, and I'm afraid hordes of scholars might accuse me of heresy if I opposed him in anything.⁷⁷ But for all that, what he's said so far about a human soul applies to ox and ass.⁷⁸

15 **Eutrapelus** Yes, and to beetle and slug, too.

Fabulla Then what's the difference between the soul of an ox and that of a man?

Eutrapelus Not much, according to those who say the soul is simply a harmony of the body's characteristics.⁷⁹ When the harmony is dissolved,
20 obviously the souls of both perish. The soul of an ox doesn't differ from that of a man even in rationality, except that oxen know less than men – and you come across men who are dumber than an ox!

Fabulla Of course – they have calves' brains.

Eutrapelus But the point that concerns you is this: that the melodiousness of
25 harmony depends on the quality of the lute.⁸⁰

Fabulla Granted.

Eutrapelus The kind of wood the lute is made of and its shape make no little difference.

Fabulla Probably.

30 **Eutrapelus** Strings for musical instruments aren't made from the guts of just any animal whatever.

Fabulla I agree.

Eutrapelus And when they're in the open air, these strings loosen and tighten because of dampness or dryness, and sometimes they break.

35 **Fabulla** That I've seen more than once.

Eutrapelus Here, then, you can perform no mean service for your baby by seeing that his mind's instrument is well tuned, damaged as little as possible, lest it be slack from laziness or shrill with anger or hoarse with drunkenness. Upbringing and the pattern of life sometimes plant these dispositions in
40 us.

Fabulla I accept the advice, but I await your defence of Aristotle.

Eutrapelus He classified the soul as animating, vegetative, and sentient.⁸¹ Soul gives life, but what is alive is not on that account animal.⁸² Trees live and age and die but don't feel, though some people do credit even them with a slight power of sensation.⁸³ In clinging objects, scarcely
 5 any power of sensation is found. Sponge-gatherers find it in a sponge;⁸⁴ woodchoppers find it in trees, if we believe them. It's said that if you strike with your palm the trunk of a tree you mean to fell, as woodchoppers are in the habit of doing, the tree is harder to cut, since it shrinks in fear.⁸⁵ What lives and feels is animal,⁸⁶ but there is nothing to prevent what is
 10 incapable of feeling from being vegetative, for example mushrooms, beets, cabbages.

Fabulla If these live and feel somehow or other, if they have power of movement when young, why don't they deserve the name 'animal'?⁸⁷

Eutrapelus Our forefathers didn't approve of it, and we have no right to depart from their decisions. Also it's irrelevant to the present subject.

Fabulla But I won't accept the proposition that a beetle and a man have the same soul.

Eutrapelus Not the same, my good friend, but they have a common faculty up to a certain point. Your soul animates your body, causes it to grow, and
 20 renders it capable of sensation. A beetle's soul does the same in its body. What a man's soul does differently from a beetle's, or in addition, is due partly to material cause. A beetle doesn't sing or speak, because it lacks organs capable of doing so.

Fabulla Then what you're saying is that if a beetle's soul entered a man's
 25 body, it would act the same as a human soul does.

Eutrapelus No, no: it wouldn't act the *same* even if it were an angelical intelligence – as I've said. The only difference between an angel and human soul is that man's soul is created to move a human body furnished with natural organs, just as a beetle's soul moves only a beetle's body. An angel
 30 is not created to animate a body but to have understanding without bodily organs.

Fabulla Can't a soul do the same?

Eutrapelus When separated from the body, yes.

Fabulla Then it does not have this independence while in the body?

Eutrapelus No, indeed, unless something unnatural occurs.

Fabulla But in place of one soul you've dumped many into my lap – animating, vegetative, sentient, rational, remembering, willing, irascible, concupiscent. One was enough for me!

Eutrapelus The same soul has different functions; the various names are
 40 drawn from these.

Fabulla I don't quite follow.

Eutrapelus But I'll see that you do follow. In the bedroom you're a wife, in the shop a weaver of tapestries, in the store a seller of tapestries, in the kitchen a cook, among the menservants and maidservants a mistress, among the children a mother – and yet you're all these in the same house.

5 **Fabulla** You're a thickheaded reasoner,⁸⁸ all right! So the mind's in the body as I'm in a house?

Eutrapelus Yes.

Fabulla But while I weave in the shop I don't cook in the kitchen.

Eutrapelus You're not *only* a soul, but a soul bearing a body. The body
10 can't be present in many places at the same time. The soul, since it is simple form, is in the whole body in such a way that all of it is in every part of the body, yet it does not perform the same action through all the parts, or in the same manner through the parts, however affected they are.⁸⁹ For it knows
15 and remembers in the brain, grows angry in the heart, lusts in the liver, hears in the ears, sees in the eyes, smells in the nostrils, tastes in the palate and tongue, perceives in all parts of the body connected with the nervous system. It doesn't feel in hair or tips of the nails. Even a lung doesn't feel by itself, nor does the liver, nor (perhaps) the spleen.

Fabulla In some parts, therefore, it merely animates and causes growth.

20 **Eutrapelus** Evidently.

Fabulla If the same soul does all this in one man, it follows that as soon as the foetus begins to grow in the mother's womb – the sign of life – it perceives and understands – unless perhaps one man has many souls to start with, and then, after the others have given way, a single one does
25 everything. So man will have been first a plant, then an animal, last of all a human being.

Eutrapelus To Aristotle, what you say might not seem far-fetched. To me it is more likely that the rational soul is infused along with life,⁹⁰ but this soul, like a tiny flame stifled under damp wood, is not yet able to exert its power.

30 **Fabulla** Then the mind is bound to the body it acts on and moves?

Eutrapelus Just as a tortoise is to the shell it bears.

Fabulla It moves the shell, certainly, but so that it is itself moved at the same time, as a pilot turns the ship whithersoever he pleases, yet he himself is moved along with the ship.

35 **Eutrapelus** Yes, and as a squirrel turns his cage, he himself on the jump all the while.

Fabulla So the soul both affects and is affected by the body?

Eutrapelus Clearly, so far as its workings are concerned.

Fabulla With regard to its essential nature, therefore, a fool's soul is equal
40 to Solomon's.

Eutrapelus Nothing absurd about that.

Fabulla Consequently angels are equal too, since they have no substance (which you say is the source of inequality).

Eutrapelus Enough of philosophy for now. Let the theologians worry about these questions, while we resume what we began. If you would like to be
 5 a complete mother, take care of your baby's little body, so that after it has freed itself from vapours,⁹¹ the spark of reason⁹² may have the support of good and serviceable bodily organs. Every time you hear your boy squalling, believe that he's asking this of you. When you see on your breasts those two little swollen fountains, so to speak, flowing with milk of their own accord,
 10 believe that Nature is reminding you of your duty. Otherwise, when your child is ready to speak and with his sweet baby-talk calls you 'mamma,' what will be your reaction, hearing this from him to whom you refused the breast and whom you banished to a hired nurse, just as if you had put him under a sheep or a goat? What if he calls you 'half-mother'⁹³ instead of
 15 'mother' when he can talk? You'll fetch the rod, I dare say. But the woman who refuses to nurse what she bore is scarcely a half-mother. The better part of childbearing is the nursing of the tender baby, for he's nourished not only with milk but by the fragrance of the mother's body as well.⁹⁴ He needs that now familiar, recognized fluid which he absorbed in her body and by which
 20 he grew strong. And for my part, I'm convinced that children's characters are injured by the nature of the milk just as in fruits or plants the moisture of the soil changes the quality of what it nourishes. Or do you suppose the common saying 'He drank in his spite with his nurse's milk'⁹⁵ has no basis? I doubt if the Greeks were wrong in their phrase 'like nurses' in connection
 25 with someone who doesn't get enough to eat, for nurses put very little of the food they chew into the baby's mouth; most of it they swallow themselves.⁹⁶ Hence one who presently rejects what she produced hasn't even borne a child; that's aborting rather than bearing. And for such women I think the etymology of the Greeks,⁹⁷ who conjecture that the word μήτηρ 'mother' is
 30 derived from μή τηρεῖν 'not take care of,' is fitting, for simply to take on some wet-nurse for a baby still warm from its mother is a kind of exposure.

Fabulla I'd agree, unless the woman selected were one who met all your requirements.

Eutrapelus Even if it made no difference what milk a delicate child drinks, or what saliva it swallows with the pre-chewed food,⁹⁸ or even if you came
 35 across a nurse of the sort I doubt exists, do you imagine anyone can put up with all the irksomeness of nursing as a mother can – the filth, the sitting up late, the bawling, the illnesses, the never sufficiently attentive watching? If there's any woman who loves like a mother, it will be one who cares like
 40 a mother. Yes, and what's more, your son may love you less, his natural affection being divided, as it were, between two mothers; and your devotion

to him will cool in turn. The result will be that when he's older, he'll be the less willing to obey your commands and you'll care less for him – perhaps you'll see the nurse in the way he behaves. Now one of the main steps in the learning process is mutual affection between teacher and pupil.⁹⁹ If, therefore, none of the sweet scent of natural devotion is lost, you'll instil principles of good conduct into him more easily. The mother is of no small importance in this respect, both because the material she moulds is most plastic and because it is responsive to every suggestion.

Fabulla So far as I can see, childbearing is not so simple an affair as people commonly suppose.

Eutrapelus If you doubt me, here's Paul speaking quite plainly of woman: 'She shall be saved,' he says, 'in childbearing.'¹⁰⁰

Fabulla So she who bears a child is saved?

Eutrapelus Oh, no; he adds, 'if the children continue in faith.'¹⁰¹ You haven't fulfilled the duty of a childbearer unless you've first formed the delicate little body of your son, then fashioned his equally pliable mind through good education.¹⁰²

Fabulla But it's not in the mother's power to guarantee that her sons will persevere in righteousness.

Eutrapelus That may be, but vigilant instruction is so important that Paul thinks mothers should be blamed if children go wrong. In brief, if you do the best you can, God will join his help to your earnestness.

Fabulla Your eloquence has certainly persuaded me, Eutrapelus, if you could persuade my parents and husband likewise.

Eutrapelus I'll undertake this if you back me up.

Fabulla I promise.

Eutrapelus But may one see your boy?

Fabulla Of course. Syrisca,¹⁰³ send for nurse and baby.

Eutrapelus A fine lad! They say one should overlook an initial attempt,¹⁰⁴ but you've produced a masterpiece in your first try.

Fabulla It's no carven image that stands in need of art.

Eutrapelus True, but it's a model of one. However accounted for, it has turned out very well. I only hope the figures you weave on tapestries may turn out as well.

Fabulla But you, on the other hand, paint better than you produce.

Eutrapelus So Nature has decreed, to be fair with everybody. How careful Nature is that nothing be lost! She has exhibited two persons in one: nose and eyes recall the father, brow and chin the mother. Can you commit so dear a pledge as this to another's keeping? Women who could bear to do that seem to me doubly cruel, since they do it not merely at a risk to the child

whom they banish but even to themselves, because their milk, tainted by their refusal to nurse, often causes dangerous diseases. Thus it turns out that while they pay strict attention to the beauty of one body, they're careless about the life of two, and while on guard against premature old age, they

5 expose themselves to premature death. – What have you named the boy?

Fabulla Cornelius.¹⁰⁵

Eutrapelus That was his paternal grandfather's name. May he resemble that worthiest of men in his conduct, too!

Fabulla We'll do our best. But look here, Eutrapelus, I'll beg one favour of
10 you.

Eutrapelus Nay, consider me your slave; command, and you shall get your wish.

Fabulla Then I won't free you until you complete the business begun for me.

15 **Eutrapelus** What's that?

Fabulla First, that you advise me about the care of the child's health; then, when he's stronger, about the elements of his moral and spiritual growth.¹⁰⁶

Eutrapelus I'll be glad to do that in so far as I know how, but in our next chat. Just now I'm off to plead with your husband and parents.

20 **Fabulla** I hope and pray your plea will please!¹⁰⁷

NOTES

1 Eutrapelus means 'witty,' 'well-spoken'; Fabulla, 'fond of talk.'

2 Ordinarily a 'white crow' was proverbial for an extreme rarity or impossibility. Here the crow is a kind of door knocker. 'The New Mother' is the only example cited in OED (sv 'crow' 7) of Latin *cornix* in this sense. Since, as Fabulla says, the white cloth gives notice of a birth in the house, it is intended also as a 'Quiet, please' sign. In his note on the phrase Petrus Rabus (Rotterdam 1693) says such 'crows' were commonly used for this purpose in the Low Countries. This information is confirmed by de Beatis, who was there in 1517 (*Travel Journal* 100): 'When women have given birth to a male child they let it be known by tying a kerchief to the door knocker (which all the doors have).'

3 Another much-married man by this name appears in 'The Old Men's Chat.'

4 An obscenity (Catullus 58.5), as Erasmus notes in *De copia* LB I 11F / CWE 24 315:30

5 Such censure of the times as follows here, including a catalogue of evils, is as common in Erasmus as in other moralists ancient or modern. His *De bello Turcico* begins with a long list of prevalent ills in Christian society (LB v 345C–350B); other examples in *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB v 1297C–D; Allen Ep 2260:48–62; and the colloquies 'A Fish Diet,' 'Charon,' and 'Cyclops.' The notion of a god unattentive to business recalls a passage in Lucian's *Bis accusatus* 1–3. Erasmus' friend and patron John Fisher, then bishop of Rochester, deploring endemic vice among clergy and people, wrote in 1509

that 'perchance we shal thynke that almyghty god slombreth not onely, but also that he hath slepte soundly a grete season . . . it semeth almyghty god to be in maner in a deed slepe, suffrynge these grete enormytees so longe' (*English Works* ed J.E.B. Mayor, EETS extra series 27 [London 1876; repr 1975] 170).

- 6 King of Denmark 1513–23; then driven out by his subjects. Failing to regain his throne in 1531–2, he was captured and imprisoned for the rest of his life (d 1559). Since he was anything but devout, Erasmus' respectful language about him is puzzling. Perhaps Erasmus thought, as Luther did, that although Christian was 'unjust before God and the world,' still his subjects had no right to depose him (*Ob Kriegsleute auch in seligem Stande sein können / Whether Soldiers Too Can Be Saved* WA 19 641–2 / LW 46 113–15).
- 7 Because he was captured by them in the battle of Pavia, 24 February 1525, and held prisoner in Spain until the treaty of Madrid was signed in January 1526, too recently for Erasmus to take notice of it in this edition of February 1526. He was not actually released until March 1526. Francis I is praised in *Querela pacis* LB IV 642B / CWE 27 321. A letter from the king to Erasmus is reproduced photographically in Allen v and in CWE 10 with Ep 1375 (July 1523). Some months later (December 1523) Erasmus dedicated to him the Paraphrase on Mark (Allen Ep 1400). See further 'A Fish Diet' n89.
- 8 Charles . . . the whole world.] The first edition of this colloquy, February 1526, read: 'Charles is making a new realm of the whole globe,' but later Erasmus, fearing the sentence – and especially the word 'new' – would offend the French, changed it to its present form in the edition of March 1529. For Erasmus' explanation see Allen Ep 2126:1–40.
- 9 'King of the Romans' (a title given to the heir of the emperor), brother of Charles V, archduke of Austria from 1521, king of Hungary and Bohemia from 1526, Ferdinand succeeded Charles as emperor 1556. Erasmus was strongly urged to become his tutor but declined (Ep 917). His *Institutio principis christiani* was liked by Ferdinand (Allen Ep 970:22–5 / CWE Ep 970:25–8; *Apologiae contra Stunicam* LB IX 371E), and his Paraphrase on John was dedicated to him (Ep 1333). See CEBR.
- 10 *bulimia*, ravenous hunger, but this hunger is for money
- 11 The reference is to the so-called Peasants' War or Peasants' Revolt of 1524–5, which affected large areas of Germany and Switzerland and attracted the active support of many discontented townspeople as well as peasants. German peasants had long complained of economic, social, and political oppression at the hands of their landlords (many of them monasteries and other ecclesiastical foundations) and of the expanding early modern state. They had appealed both to their traditional rights and to 'divine law' to justify their demands for economic and social justice, and there had been sporadic violence in the period 1478–1520. See Strauss *Manifestations of Discontent* 144–53. New in 1524–5 was not only the scale of the uprising but also the rebels' attempt, most notably in the famous *Twelve Articles* of 1525 (text in LW 46:8–16), to justify their demands on the basis of the Lutheran notions of Christian freedom, the priesthood of all believers, and the supreme authority of Scripture. For their part, Luther and the other reformers, though blaming the revolt on the

bad government of the princes and sympathizing with most of the peasants' demands, condemned the revolt itself as a breach of the obedience to lawful lords required by Scripture and justified the use of force to end the uprising. For Luther's views, including his harsh pamphlet *Wider die räuberischen und mörderischen Rotten der Bauern* (*Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*), see WA 18 279–401 / LW 46 17–85. In the final, bloody phase of the war, in the spring of 1525, an estimated 70–75,000 rebels lost their lives.

In a letter of September 1525 Erasmus comments on the peasants in much the same fashion as in these lines of the colloquy (Allen Ep 1606:17–28 / CWE Ep 1606:20–33). For additional comments in 1525–6 see Allen Epp 1574:25–31, 1585:29–31, 1603:10–11, 89–92 / CWE Epp 1574:30–6, 1585:35–7, 1603:10–12, 100–4, Allen Ep 1686:18–28. He deplored the violence but did not excuse the social injustices that incited it. At the same time, however, like contemporary Catholic observers in general, he blamed the bloody clash between princes and peasants on Luther, whose intemperate writings, he said, had spurred the rebels on. See Heiko A. Oberman 'The Gospel of Social Unrest: 450 Years after the So-Called "German Peasants' War" of 1525' *Harvard Theological Review* 69 (1976) 103–29, especially 113–16. Although there clearly is a connection between the popular uprising of 1524–5 and the Reformation, the precise nature of that connection remains a matter of controversy. See Hans J. Hillerbrand, 'The German Reformation and the Peasants' War' in *The Social History the Reformation* ed Lawrence P. Buck and Jonathan W. Zophy (Ohio State University Press 1972) 106–36; *The German Peasant War of 1515 – New Viewpoints* ed Bob Scribner and Gerhard Benecke (London 1979), which reprints the Oberman article cited above; and Peter Blickle *The Revolution of 1525: The German Peasants' War from a New Perspective* trans Thomas A. Brady Jr and H.C. Erik Midelfort (Baltimore and London 1985).

12 *collabitur ecclesiae domus*. See n16 below.

13 Cf Matt 27:35; Mark 15:24; John 19:23–4. A piece of it was one of the reputed relics at Trier; see 'Exorcism' n33.

14 Ps 80:13–14 (Vulg 79). Some readers would have recognized these words, not only because they were biblical but also because they were quoted in the preamble to the papal bull *Exsurge Domine* of June 1520, condemning Luther and threatening excommunication if he did not recant; text in Karl Mirbt *Quelle zur Geschichte des Papsttums und des römischen Katholismus* 6th ed rev Kurt Aland (Tübingen 1967) no 789; Kidd *Documents* 75 no 38; translation in Hillerbrand *The Reformation in Its Own Words* (n11 above) 80–4. See 'Faith' n3, and for Erasmus' comments on the bull my edition of *Inquisitio de fide* 79.

15 Like so many other reformers (for instance Wyclif), Colet condemned the severity of clerics in their demands for tithes and other stipends or fees (lectures on Romans, in *Opera* I 118–20, 128 [English], 218–20, 224 [Latin]; 'Convocation Sermon' in Lupton's *Life of Colet* 296). On Colet's emphasis on covetousness as the besetting vice of the clergy see H.C. Porter 'The Gloomy Dean and the Law: John Colet, 1466–1519' in *Essays in Modern Church History*

- in *Memory of Norman Sykes* ed G.V. Bennett and J.D. Walsh (London 1966) 19–43.
- 16 *collabitur ecclesiam domus ... periclitatur ... theologorum dignitas ... vacillant vota*. Similar phrases (*Vacillabit auctoritas theologorum ... a fundamenta collabitur ecclesia catholica*) occur in a dire prediction of what would happen if Erasmus' advice about vernacular translations of Scripture were adopted; see *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* (1525) LB IX 790F.
 - 17 For example by Andreas Karlstadt, who went far beyond Luther in his views and practices, and most of all by Zwingli and other sacramentarians who denied the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, regarding the Eucharist as merely symbolic
 - 18 See 1 John 2:18, 22 and 4:3; 2 John 7. Here Satan is the personification of evil, implacably hostile to the good. 'Antichrist' became a common term in controversy for a hated and supposedly utterly wicked adversary. Cf 'A Fish Diet' 720:40–1. See W. Bousset *Der Antichrist* (Göttingen 1895; English translation by A.H. Keane London 1896); a recent work in English is Richard K. Emmerson's *Antichrist in the Middle Ages* (Seattle 1981). The notion of Antichrist was common in Renaissance preaching and prophecy (John W. O'Malley 'Giles of Viterbo: A Reformer's Thought on Renaissance Rome' *Renaissance Quarterly* 20 [1967] 7 n18). To some of its severest critics, including Luther and Calvin, the papacy signified Antichrist. See index to Kidd *Documents* sv 'Antichrist' and R.W. Scribner *For the Sake of Simple Folk* (Cambridge 1986) chapter 6.
 - 19 The menace of the Turks, evident for so many years, tested Erasmus' horror of war and his profound commitment to peace. European wars among states, waged on more or less specious pretexts of right or honour for territorial or dynastic reasons, he denounced on many occasions, sometimes with impressive eloquence. From Leo x, who became pope in 1513, he hoped – in vain – for a pontificate as pacific as that of his predecessor Julius II was aggressive. One of the purposes of the Fifth Lateran Council in 1512–17 was to plan for a war against the Turks. At the final session in March 1517 the council voted to call a crusade against them and to finance this by tithing all benefices for three years ([Constitution imposing taxes and closing the council]; Tanner I 654). Leo x gave the scheme his strong support but met insuperable difficulties in putting it into effect. When the Sultan Selim died in September 1520, Francis I and Charles v began to lose whatever interest they had had in the crusade and resumed their plans for conquering each other. Consult Kenneth M. Setton 'Pope Leo x and the Turkish Peril' *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 113 (1969) 367–424. For the Paris theologians' opinions see W.F. Bense 'Paris Theologians on War and Peace, 1521–1529' *Church History* 41 (1972) 168–85.
- In 1516–17 Erasmus published impressive but futile arguments urging the Christian monarchs to resolve their differences rationally by arbitration and spare their subjects the burdens of war and destruction (*Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 607C–612A / ASD IV-1 213–19 / Born 249–57 / CWE 27 282–8; *Querela pacis* LB IV 625A–642D / ASD IV-2 61–100 / CWE 27 293–322; *Adagia* IV i 1: *Dulce bellum inexpertis*). The 'age of gold' he looked for in 1517 (Allen Ep 566:31–5 / CWE Ep 566:35–9) became more distant than ever, the Turkish

peril ever closer. The Turks were raiding in Hungary and Austria in 1521 and thereafter. They captured Rhodes in 1522, and in August 1526, six months after this colloquy appeared in print, they defeated the Hungarian army in the battle of Mohács. The prophetic remarks of Eutrapelus proved to be accurate. In September 1529 the Turks besieged Vienna but withdrew after a few weeks. Yet the European struggle against the Turks continued for the rest of the century. 'Turk' became synonymous with 'scourge' (see C.A. Patrides "'The Bloody and Cruell Turk'" in *Studies in the Renaissance* 10 [1963] 126–35).

Erasmus never wavered in his convictions about the wickedness and waste of war, but he was not a complete pacifist. He conceded, though reluctantly, that if there is such a thing as a just war, it is one fought for survival when a foreign enemy has invaded your land. See references in Craig R. Thompson 'Erasmus as Internationalist and Cosmopolitan' *ARG* 46 (1955) 177–84 and 'Charon' nn16 and 28. War against the Turks is right if waged with righteous motives (*De bello Turcico* LB v 355B, 356D–E, 363E, 367A–B). But Erasmus had no illusions about the common and perhaps inevitable corruption, moral and religious, of all war. The Turkish troubles were a divine punishment upon Europeans for their sinful lives. 'We Turks fight with Turks' (ibidem LB v 353B, 357D–E).

For analysis of *De bello Turcico* see J.-C. Margolin 'Erasmus et la guerre contre les Turcs' *Il pensiero politico* 13 (1980) 1–38.

- 20 Luther, apparently with the opening and closing sentences of this paragraph in mind, denounced the entire passage as offensively irreverent (wa *Tischreden* 3 no 2939a).
- 21 Fabulla has agreed that a boy is best now 'because it was God's will.' That males are superior, and rightly dominant, was for so many ages the customary and official assumption in civil and canon law, and so evident in the teachings and events recorded in Scripture and hence in the social institutions of Christendom, that it was seldom questioned seriously. Both Fabulla and Eutrapelus know the proof-texts, such as 1 Cor 11:3–9 and 1 Tim 2:11–14, which, like other such texts, have their source in Genesis. As we have already seen in earlier colloquies, some of the young women in Erasmus' dialogues are at least the equals of men in intelligence and common sense – Maria in 'Courtship' and Magdalia in 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady,' for example. Xanthippe in 'Marriage' is not of the same intellectual calibre as Maria and Magdalia but clearly superior to her husband. Fabulla in the present colloquy is a match for Eutrapelus in intelligence, though she does not have his education. She knows that the divine will cannot be questioned, nor has she any wish to question it. Eutrapelus doubtless supposes, as men do, that males are simply and by nature superior. Therefore, she asks, if we exclude God from the cast, what is the reason for that supposition? Eutrapelus dismisses the question as irrelevant, but he would probably have agreed with the sentiment of Montaigne, who told a pregnant woman that she would surely have a boy 'for you are too noble-spirited to begin otherwise than with a male' (*Essays* 1.26 'Of the Education of Children'; Frame 109).

- 22 For other references to custom in the *Colloquies* see 'The Profane Feast' n58.
- 23 Smith (*Key* 39n) calls attention to Cornelius Agrippa's emphasis of this point in his *De nobilitate et praeexcellencia feminei sexus*, but that book was not published before 1529. Erasmus could have seen it only in a manuscript copy, and it is unlikely that he did so. He did not have to be reminded of this commonplace.
- 24 1 Cor 11:3, 7–9
- 25 1 Cor 6:15; Eph 5:29–30
- 26 As Erasmus often deplores. See 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 333:19–21. This passage is one of the very few places where satire of the military is expressed by a woman.
- 27 *post principia*, from Terence *Eunuchus* 781. See *Adagia* I iii 94.
- 28 Medea in Euripides' tragedy says she would rather stand three times in the front line of battle than bear one child (*Medea* 248–51).
- 29 Cf the remarks of the young wife in 'Marriage' 319:15–20.
- 30 As a practical person, Eutrapelus make a realistic choice. For nightingales as a rare and expensive delicacy see Horace *Satires* 2.3.245.
- 31 See introduction to this colloquy for a few of the standard classical pronouncements of the doctrine and Renaissance repetitions of it. Eutrapelus' surprise and concern when he learns that Fabulla is not nursing her baby is a reaction that would certainly have been shared by many contemporary readers. Belief that only the mother should nurse the infant was a dictum of tradition, perpetuated by the general agreement of moralists and preachers; it was a common topic for rhetoricians. Erasmus uses it in an explanation of the division and subdivision of a sermon topic in *Ecclesiastes* LB V 875F–876E. He presents thirteen arguments against handing infants over to a wet-nurse (most of which Eutrapelus uses) and recommends that they be gathered under three main headings: it is against the law of nature and of God; it is bad for the physical and spiritual health of the child; it is bad for the health of the mother. Thomas Wilson, citing Cicero, agrees that three parts are enough for a division and repeats these propositions in *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1560) ed G.H. Mair (Oxford 1909) 109–10. Of later writers on the subject Rousseau may be singled out because of his impassioned pages in book 1 of *Emile* (1762). His arguments are much the same as Erasmus', stated with more vehemence. He is credited with having converted many French women to his views.
- 32 See n22 above.
- 33 Erasmus notes in his *Encomium medicinae* that in ancient times the laws had an obligation to make certain nurses were healthy (ASD I-4 182:334–6 / CWE 29 46).
- 34 Cf Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.3.4 and *Cyropaedia* 2.1.28.
- 35 Virgil's *steriles avenae* (*Georgics* 1.154)
- 36 *Epistles* 1.2.69–70. See *Adagia* II iv 20 and 'Courtship' n79.
- 37 Or darnel; supposedly bad for the eyes, causing near-sightedness or blindness. In *Adagia* II i 29 Erasmus cites Plautus *Miles gloriosus* 321–2 and Ovid *Fasti* 1.691.
- 38 *mentis*. *Mens* is seldom used in this dialogue. *Animus* is the usual word for 'mind,' *anima* for 'soul,' though sometimes the distinction between 'mind' and

'soul' in English can be ambiguous. See n53 below. 'All natural bodies are organs of the soul' (Aristotle *De anima* 2.4 415b18).

- 39 As happens in Lucian's *Somnium sive gallus*, one of the dialogues translated by Erasmus and printed in 1506. This cock was once the philosopher Pythagoras.
- 40 The sailors of Ulysses were turned into swine by Circe (*Odyssey* 10).
- 41 In the *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, which is based on an earlier Greek romance, *Lucius or the Ass*, formerly attributed to Lucian
- 42 *agas sophistriam*. See 'Courtship' n15.
- 43 Used here as in the old physiology and psychology, not in the biblical and especially Pauline sense as at 599:15–18 below and in Erasmus' religious writings; for example *Enchiridion* chapter 7 (LB v 19A–20E / Holborn 52–5 / CWE 66 51–4). Cf Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* 54–61.
The spirits (*spiritus*) in medieval psychology, whatever they were – and nobody seemed quite certain of that – kept body and soul together. They were thought of as animating principles. Burton thinks of them as subtle, serviceable vapours, 'expressed from the Blood,' 'Naturall,' 'Vittall,' or 'Animal' (*Anatomy of Melancholy* part 1, section 1, memb 2, subs 2 [I 147–8]). How they could be material was also unclear, but as Erasmus says here, they are substantial (*corporales*). However defined, they were understood to be indispensable, for they knit 'that subtil knot, which makes us man' (Donne 'The Ecstasie' 64). See further C.S. Lewis *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge 1964) 167–9.
- 44 In earlier medical usage exhalations within the stomach or other organs. They were thought to be injurious to health.
- 45 *summae metae colophon*, the cover or 'head' of the alembic. Erasmus' discussion of *colophon* in *Adagia* III iii 45 does not allude to use of the word as part of a still or alembic.
- 46 According to old medical theories the human body has four elements; earth, air, fire, and water. The humours are the principal fluids of the body. Each element produces a characteristic humour which accounts for a person's temperament, his 'humour' in the modern sense of the term. Thus earth (cold and dry) produces black bile and a melancholic ('bilious') temperament; air (hot and moist), blood and 'sanguine' temperament; fire (hot and dry) produces yellow bile and 'choleric' temperament; water (cold and moist), phlegm and 'phlegmatic' or cool or sluggish temperament.
- 47 In *Naturalis historia* 20.216–18, Pliny tells of many uses of this plant but says nothing about its effects on the memory.
- 48 *Adagia* I viii 51, and see 'The Godly Feast' n63.
- 49 In *Adagia* III ix 18 Homer's verses on the warrior's need of sustenance (*Iliad* 19.161–70) are said to be applicable to the student of letters too.
- 50 In *Adagia* III vi 18, first printed in the March 1526 edition, Erasmus quotes a Greek proverb, found in Jerome (Ep 52.11 PL 22 537) and other authors, that 'a fat belly does not sharpen one's wits.' Cf LB I 503C. Erasmus refers also to Gellius (4.19), who says that if young boys eat too much they become dull and sluggish; Gellius cites Varro's treatise *Catus* on education; see Varro *Saturarum Menippearum reliquiae* ed A. Riese (Leipzig 1865) 249 fragment 17. Erasmus seems uncertain about the source. Here he credits Aristotle, as he does again in July 1526 in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (LB v 711A), but in the

March 1526 *Adagia* he implies that Gellius relied on Plutarch, whom Gellius does not name. Whatever the source of this advice, Erasmus endorsed it (Allen Ep 56:30–1, 59–60 / CWE Ep 56:35–6, 69–70; *De pueris instituendis* LB I 503C / ASD 1-2 52:20–2 / CWE 26 323).

- 51 God as spirit: John 4:24; Rom 8:1–14; 2 Cor 3:17; on God as eternal mind see 'Faith' n21 above. On angels the teachings of Christ are inferred from Matt 16:27, 18:10, 22:30. Angels are supernal, incorporeal, immaterial, purely spiritual beings, created (as Thomas Aquinas thinks) at the same time as corporal creatures. St Bernard of Clairvaux, in his sermon on the Song of Songs 5.1–8, affirms that although spiritual and invisible, they can assume bodies temporarily when there is need to do so (PL 183 798–802). In *De consideratione* 5.5 he writes of how they abide in man (PL 182 794–5). On certain questions of their mode of being and activities medieval theologians were not unanimous, but on the principal questions the treatise on angels by Aquinas, incorporated in his *Summa theologiae* I q 50–64, expressed the consensus.

Erasmus has a compendious passage in *Ecclesiastes* on angels and why they should be revered (LB V 1094E–1095C). For many centuries the authorities on the nine orders of angels and the ways to spiritual life were the *Celestial Hierarchy* and *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, written c 500 AD by an unknown author who claimed to be the Dionysius converted after listening to St Paul preach in the Areopagus (Acts 17:34). The *Celestial Hierarchy* provided a bridge between Christian and Neoplatonic theology; hence it was venerated by Christian scholars, for instance by Ficino and other late medieval philosophers and theologians. Colet, who had a strong interest in such studies, wrote two Latin treatises or commentaries on the works of the author now known as pseudo-Dionysius: one about the celestial hierarchy, the orders of the angels and their natures and functions, and a comparable treatise on the ecclesiastical hierarchy, describing the correspondences between the heavenly orders and the priestly orders of the visible world. In a third but briefer treatise, *De sacramentis ecclesiae*, Colet supplements the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* by analysing the seven sacraments of the church. None of these writings appeared in his lifetime, nor did his expositions of Romans or 1 Corinthians. They were all edited and most of them translated by his biographer, J.H. Lupton; see Colet *Opera*.

Erasmus had doubts about the received identification of 'Dionysius.' For this opinion he was taken to task by the Paris theologians (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 916E–917C), but his scepticism was shared by some other sixteenth-century scholars.

- 52 Eutrapelus' reply to Fabulla's question – that the difference between angel and mind (or soul) is the same as between slug and snail or turtle – seems unsatisfactory, because some slugs (*limaces*) have rudimentary shells and other do not, while snails and turtles both have shells. However, Fabulla's observation that body is, so to speak, the dwelling of the mind, is relevant and useful. The living part of a snail or turtle is not the shell but what, in Fabulla's metaphor, 'dwells' in it. Eutrapelus accepts the metaphor. As Fabulla is soon to learn, a more precise Aristotelian way of putting the matter is to say that soul is the 'form' of the body.
- 53 From this line to the end of the colloquy Erasmus is consistent in his use of *animus* for 'mind' and *anima* for 'soul.' The Latin terms, like the English

- ones, are sometimes interchangeable, but their fundamental distinctions are observed in this text and translation. *Animus* is the 'rational' soul, the mind, understanding, sensibility, 'heart'; the radical meaning of *anima* 'soul' is the breath of life, or life as the animating, vital principle.
- 54 Eusebius in 'The Godly Feast' prefers to call bodies 'partners' (*collegae*) of the mind rather than instruments or organs (*De anima* 2.4 415b18) or dwellings (*domicilia*) or tombs (*sepulchra*); see 189:7–8 above. One speaker in Plato's *Phaedo* suggests the analogy of a vestment or garment for the body (cf Lucretius 3.614); another argues that the soul is a harmony. Both analogies are rejected by Socrates (*Phaedo* 85E–86D, 87B–88B, 92A–94E), who prefers to think of the body as a prison or garrison (*Phaedo* 62B; so 600:10, 14–21 below and 'The Godly Feast' 194:1–4). Erasmus calls the body a prison in *De praeparatione ad mortem* (LB v 1293E) and a garment in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (LB v 684A). On the body as a tomb see n59 below.
- 55 He died in agony after donning a blood-smeared robe sent to him by his wife Deianira in ignorance of the fact that the blood was poisoned.
- 56 He held that the same soul suffices for many bodies; a notion Aristotle dismisses as absurd (*De anima* 1.3 407b20–6). Lucian gives some amusing examples of such metempsychosis in *Somnium sive gallus* 5 and 15–27. See n39 above.
- 57 John 2:19. On the meaning of this verse see Erasmus' Paraphrase on John LB VII 517F–518A / CWE 46 42–3.
- 58 2 Pet 1:13–14
- 59 'The body a tomb' (σῶμα σῆμα) is in Plato *Cratylus* 400B–C and *Gorgias* 493A. It was long regarded as an Orphic motto, but Orphic origin is denied by E.R. Dodds *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Boston 1951) 148, 169–70 and others. Whatever its sources, the idea became a common image, for example 'a grave unto a soul' in Shakespeare's *King John* 3.4.17. Commenting in *Enchiridion* on Ps 5:9 (Vulg 5:11), Erasmus quotes the Greek phrase but distinguishes between bodies of righteous and wicked persons. Bodies of the godly are temples of the Holy Ghost, bodies of the ungodly the tombs of corpses (LB v 4F–5A / Holborn 27:10–20 / CWE 66 29).
- 60 See n54 above. Jerome quotes, with disapproval, a statement by Origen that souls are bound in the body as in a prison (Ep 51.4 PL 22 520–1).
- 61 These words recall 'The Godly Feast' 194:1–7.
- 62 Ps 142:7 (Vulg 141:8)
- 63 1 Pet 5:8
- 64 In *De re rustica* 4 he writes of building a suitable house, as does Pliny in *Naturalis historia* 18.31, but neither says explicitly that this is the first requirement for happiness.
- 65 The lessor, *locator*
- 66 The harlot in 'The Young Man and the Harlot' makes the same point about her visitor (383:7–8).
- 67 Nun of the Second Order of St Francis, founded c 1212. Of its two branches, the extremely austere Colettines may be the one Eutrapelus means.
- 68 A common motif in medieval art. For some good illustrations see T.S.R. Boase *Death in the Middle Ages* (London 1972) 31 no 17, 32 no 18, 33 no 21, 35 no 24 (souls in Abraham's bosom), 38 no 27, 40 nos 28 and 29, 41 no 30,

- 43 no 31 (souls as infants carried to Christ by angels). These examples are found on cathedral portals and altars and in psalters. See also Karl Künstle *Iconographie der christlichen Kunst* (Freiburg 1928) 564–5; Gertrud Schiller *Iconography of Christian Art* trans Janet Seligman, 2 vols (Greenwich, Conn 1972) II fig 12; Wilhelm Molsdorf *Christliche Symbolik des mittelalterslichen Kunst* (Leipzig 1926) 112 no 808. Souls are also depicted as doves and in the form of birds flying from the mouth of a dying person (Künstle 122, 538; Molsdorf no 788).
- 69 The myth related in Plato's *Phaedrus* 248A–E
- 70 Ps 55:6 (Vulg 54:7)
- 71 Rom 1:20
- 72 Eutrapelus has just referred to one of Plato's memorable passages on the soul (see n69 above). In *Enchiridion* and his writings on New Testament theology, Erasmus has occasion to recall Platonic, Neoplatonic, and Origenistic doctrines of the soul. To that extent he may be called a Platonizing Christian rather than a Christian Platonist; his religion and philosophy are Christian with a strong colouring of Platonism. The exposition of the soul that follows here, however, is wholly Aristotelian. Eutrapelus quotes, paraphrases, and summarizes some of the principal doctrines of *De anima*, since this treatise serves best his purpose of introducing Fabulla to certain important ideas better than Platonic or other explanations would do. She is an apt pupil. W.D. Ross *Aristotle* (London 1923) is a standard work; see chapter 5 on Aristotle's psychology. D.J. Allan *The Philosophy of Aristotle* (London 1952) is a good brief introduction.
- 73 *De anima* 2.1 412a20–2. The brief examination of the definition that follows summarizes *De anima* 2.1 412a1–b11. In Aristotelian terms, substance consists of matter and form. Matter is potentiality, form is actuality ('entelechy' is Aristotle's word for actuality). Knowledge is one meaning of actuality; knowing – the exercise of knowledge – is another. Natural bodies having life are substances but not souls. Body is matter, soul is form – the form of an animate body 'potentially having life,' that is, capable of life. Moreover it is the first actualizing, knowledge being prior to the exercise of knowledge. So the complete definition of soul is 'the first actualization of a natural body potentially having life,' which means an organic body. An axe is matter, material; its 'axeness' is form. If the axe were alive, its 'axeness' would be its soul. Similarly an eye is matter, whereas sight, the power of the eye, is form or soul.
- 74 Mythical artificer (builder of the Cretan labyrinth), so clever that he made lifelike statues that could move about (Plato *Euthyphro* 11B, *Meno* 97D–E). A Daedalus therefore is one who can set something in motion. In *Adagia* II iii 62 Erasmus recalls that Aristotle refers to the story in *De anima* 1.3 406b11–25 when asking whether the soul moves the body and whether the soul is self-moving. The answer is that soul causes motion but is not itself moved. Soul is not body but is not independent of body; it is 'in' a particular body (*De anima* 2.2 414a19–28). Since it is the organ of motion or change, it is the cause of life, the 'actuality' of a particular body (2.4 415b8–28).
- 75 On angels see n51 above.
- 76 Far from complete, but both expositor and pupil acquit themselves well, he in summarizing and illustrating difficult Aristotelian abstractions, she in acknowledging what seems clear but not conceding what still puzzles her.

- 77 Aristotle was the most learned of philosophers (so Erasmus in Allen Ep 2432:1–2), but Christian philosophers, despite their veneration of Aristotle and allegiance to Aristotelianism, questioned or rejected some of his teachings – necessarily, since he did not possess revelation but only reason. See Erasmus' remarks in *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1092D–1093A.
- 78 Fabulla's comment is pertinent. Even Erasmus, who holds that the soul is something more pre-eminent or excellent (*praestantius*) than Aristotle allows, concedes in one place that Aristotle's definition of the soul fits the soul of ass or goose (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 1092F).
- 79 See n54 above. Like Socrates, Aristotle denies that the soul can be a harmony (*De anima* 1.4 407b27–408a30).
- 80 Erasmus uses the same illustration, with reference to the soul, in *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1092E.
- 81 *De anima* 2.2–3 413a20–415a12
- 82 Life makes the difference between animate and inanimate, but 'life' has more than one meaning. In one respect, but one only, plants are 'alive,' since they have the nutritive or vegetative faculty; they grow. They do not have sensation, as animals do (*De anima* 2.3 414a28–b19), yet because they come into being, grow, and decay they are said to have 'a kind of soul' (ibidem 1.5 411b27–30). Cf the phrase 'living rock,' used elsewhere by Erasmus ('Faith' 426:18 and n56). Augustine however makes a distinction between 'being' and 'living.' A rock 'is' but is not alive. To good and evil creatures God gave being (*essentia*) in common with stones, vegetative life in common with trees, sensuous life in common with brutes, intellectual life in common with angels (*De civitate Dei* 5.11 PL 41 153). This schema is illustrated in Charles de Bovelles (or Bovillus) *Liber de sapiente* (1509), printed in his *Liber de intellectu* (Paris 1510). Mankind alone has an intellective soul.
- 83 Including Augustine *De civitate Dei* 11.27 PL 41 340–1. Erasmus notes that Pythagoras attributed a stupid sort of sense to trees and plants (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 921F; *De taedio Iesu* LB V 1271A).
- 84 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.148
- 85 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 24.2
- 86 'But animals must be endowed with sensation, since Nature does nothing in vain' (*De anima* 3.12 434a30–1).
- 87 At a later time, Francis Bacon's *Silva silvarum* suggested that not only do all bodies whatsoever have perception, even though they have no sense (cognition), but that sometimes in some bodies this perception is more subtle than sense, and that inquiry into this subject would be a rewarding study (*Works* ed James Spedding, R.L. Ellis, and D.D. Heath, 7 vols [London 1857–9] v 63–4). On the significance of this speculation see A.N. Whitehead *Science and the Modern World* (London 1926) chapter 3.
- 88 *pingui Minerva*, like a crass or stupid Minerva; proverbial (*Adagia* I i 37)
- 89 Nothing is said about what the death of the body means with respect to the soul, but Eutrapelus and Fabulla know what their religion teaches on that subject. Christianity had always preached personal immortality, as the Apostles' Creed attests ('and the life everlasting'; see 'Faith' 430:13–26). Medieval Averroists and in Erasmus' time certain modern Aristotelians and septsics, of whom the most important was Pietro Pomponazzi, denied this doctrine, accepting instead an

- impersonal immortality. Consequently the Fifth Lateran Council, in the decree *Apostolici religionis* (1513), condemned such teachings, affirming that the soul 'not only truly exists of itself and essentially as the form of the human body . . . but it is also immortal; and further, for the enormous number of bodies into which it is infused individually, it can and ought to be and is multiplied' (Tanner 1605). On the relevance of this decree to the Christian philosophy's confrontation with Averroism see Etienne Gilson *Elements of Christian Philosophy* (New York 1960) 203–19.
- 90 This was the Thomistic and generally accepted doctrine.
- 91 Note 44 above
- 92 spark of reason] Reading *mentis igniculus* as in the edition of March 1533 instead of *mentis igniculis* as in the first edition. The phrase resumes the figure of 604:28–9 above.
- 93 From Gellius 12.1.6
- 94 Cf Erasmus *Oratio de virtute* (1503) LB V 69F–70A.
- 95 *Adagia* I vii 54; Gellius 12.1.18
- 96 *Adagia* III v 30, IV viii 93
- 97 The so-called *Etymologicum magnum*, a compilation (c 1100) of Byzantine lexicons. In the edition I consulted, the word quoted by Erasmus as *τηρεῖν* is *τηρεῖσθαι* (*Etymologicum magnum* . . . ed T. Gaisford [Oxford 1848] 584:43). Possibly Erasmus saw and used the splendid folio edition printed in Venice in 1499 by Zacharius Callierges, one of Aldo Manuzio's principal rivals at that time, when he was in Venice working on the *Adagia* in 1508. There too the reading is *τηρεῖσθαι*.
- 98 'What saliva it swallows' is plain speech, but Erasmus recalls these words from the opening lines of Jerome's famous prefatory letter to Pope Damasus (PL 29 [1865] 557B) on the revision, now the Vulgate version, of the Gospels. See *Adagia* II iv 19.
- 99 Which Erasmus, like other leading humanists, emphasized. See Allen Ep 56:9–12 / CWE Ep 56:11–15; *De pueris instituendis* LB I 503E / ASD I-2 53:25 / CWE 26 324.
- 100 1 Tim 2:15
- 101 The received Vulgate text had a singular verb here; hence the passage meant 'if she [the mother] continues' in the faith. Erasmus rejects this for the Greek text, in which the verb is plural: 'if they [her children] continue.' He cites Jerome Ep 107.6 (PL 22 873–4) and other Fathers and deplores the interpretation of Thomas Aquinas, who did not or could not consult the Greek text (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 933B–E; *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 708B–D).
- 102 For, as Erasmus likes to say, men are not born but made or formed (*De pueris instituendis* LB I 493B / ASD I-2 31:21 / CWE 26 304). See R.L. DeMolen 'Erasmus on Childhood' ERSY 2 (1982) 25–46.
- 103 Name of a servant in Terence (*Adelphi* 763; *Eunuchus* 772)
- 104 *Adagia* I ix 61
- 105 Also the name of a most worthy man in another colloquy first printed in this same edition. See 'The Funeral' 776–9.
- 106 The colloquy 'Youth' shows what successful moral and spiritual development is like.
- 107 A play on *orator* 'pleader' and *exorator* 'successful pleader'; similarly at 'Sport' 75:25–6

A PILGRIMAGE FOR RELIGION'S SAKE

Peregrinatio religionis ergo

First printed in the February 1526 edition.

Erasmus visited the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in the summer of 1512 with a Cambridge friend (see n78 below and Ep 262). The text alludes to a previous visit also, but of that nothing is known (n7). The date of his visit to Canterbury, on which he was accompanied by John Colet, Dean of St Paul's, is uncertain but must have been between 1512 and late June or early July of 1514, when he left England.

The date of composition of this colloquy is equally uncertain. The supposititious letter from Mary is dated 1 August 1524; on this see n41. Erasmus might have written the dialogue at any time between 1514 and 1526, but if before 1522 could not then have intended it for the *Colloquies*, for apparently he did not think of adding to that little book until 1522. An early date of composition, when his impressions of Walsingham and Canterbury were fresh, might account for the numerous details in his descriptions of buildings and much else. Inaccuracies occur in the text we have; but had he waited a decade or longer before writing what he remembered, it would be surprising if there were not more of these. If the dialogue existed by 1522, why was it not printed until 1526? Since answers to such questions are lacking, it may be best to assume that the colloquy was composed between 1523 and 1526, though parts or drafts of it may have been in hand earlier.

This famous colloquy, one of three exceptionally provocative dialogues on religion in the February 1526 edition, is not the author's only contribution to pilgrim literature, but is easily the best: wholly characteristic in its blending of travelogue with observations on spiritual, social, even financial aspects of the tourist industry that pilgrimages resembled; typically Erasmian too in satirical and ironical comment on what this sensitive traveller found deceptive or distasteful. It was published before ideas or reforms associated with the Reformation had received any approval in England, yet certain institutions and customs described here came to an end in England sooner than its author or his earliest readers could have foreseen. It anticipates some of the arguments used by English rulers and reformers to justify the suppression of monastic houses. As late as 1531 Thomas Bilney of Cambridge, who had preached against relics, images, and pilgrimages, was arrested for heresy. He recanted, but four years afterwards he resumed preaching, was seized as a relapsed heretic, and was burned. In 1531, again, Convocation acknowledged Henry VIII as 'supreme head' of the church in England 'as far as the law of

Christ allows.' This qualifying phrase was omitted in the Act of Supremacy of 1534. In the next three years Parliament and Convocation, under pressure by the crown, abolished the papal prerogatives in England. In 1536 the government began to suppress monasteries, destroy shrines, and confiscate their treasures. (Note Erasmus' prediction in 'The Godly Feast' 199:1-4.) Archbishop Cranmer attacked images, adoration of saints, and purgatory in sermons of February and March 1536. Another bishop, reformer, and future martyr, Hugh Latimer, in a sermon preached before the clergy 9 June 1536, the day before the opening of Parliament, used strong language about the 'intolerable abuses' of images, pilgrimages, and relics (*Selected Sermons* 23-5). The first royal Injunctions for the clergy, issued by Thomas Cromwell as the king's deputy for ecclesiastical affairs in August 1536, forbade them to 'set forth or extol any images, relics, or miracles for any superstition or lucre' or to 'allure the people by any enticements to the pilgrimage of any saint'; the second Injunctions, October 1538, required that 'feigned images' be removed (*Documents Illustrative of English Church History* ed Henry Gee and W.J. Hardy [London 1896; repr 1910] 271, 277). By 1538 most of the smaller monasteries had been suppressed and the days of the larger ones, including Walsingham and Canterbury, were numbered. The wealthiest and most popular shrine in England, St Thomas Becket's in Canterbury, was destroyed in September 1538. In November of that year a royal proclamation declared that because of his opposition to his king, Henry II, Becket was no longer to be called saint or martyr 'but rather esteemed to have been a rebel and traitor to his prince,' and henceforth ignored by Henry VIII's loving subjects (*Tudor Royal Proclamations* ed P.L. Hughes and J.F. Larkin, 3 vols [New Haven, Conn 1964-9] I 275-6).

In 1536 or near that date an anonymous English translation of Erasmus' colloquy appeared as *A Dialogue . . . by the noble and famose clarke Desiderius Erasmus intituled ye Pylgremage of pure devotyon* (STC 10454 and Devereux 4.12; text in de Vocht *Earliest English Translations* 101-95; Spurgeon 3-97). Since it is most unlikely that a work so useful as propaganda would have been allowed to come out at this time without permission of the government, there is good reason to think Cromwell approved this translation, which has a harsh anticlerical and antipapal preface. It was not the only colloquy convenient for purposes of propaganda. Official or semi-official sponsorship of translations of his writings was but one of many ways in which the learning and ideas of Erasmus circulated in Tudor society. On this subject see the important study by James K. McConica, *English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI* (Oxford 1965). A few additional notes are in my 'Erasmus and Tudor England' *Actes du congrès Erasme . . . Rotterdam 27-29 octobre 1969* (Amsterdam and London 1971) 29-68.

Unlike the earlier and briefer 'Rash Vows', this colloquy is based on personal experiences, though undoubtedly these were recollected in

tranquillity with the aid of artistic imagination. Some critics have complained that Erasmus must be an unreliable witness. He gets some of the facts wrong. A few misstatements may be due to the familiar willingness of glib officials to impress inquisitive tourists. To expect the dialogue to have the accuracy of a guidebook is to misunderstand the author's purposes. On images, invocation of saints, and relics he wrote much to which orthodoxy could not object, much too that gave offence – some pages in 'The Shipwreck,' for example. As so often happens, it was not merely the statements themselves but their insinuations or tone that pleased many readers and provoked many others. That images provided 'silent poetry,' he granted (*De concordia* LB v 501B–C; *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1187D), but he deplored abuses attached to the *cultus divorum*. See his defence of this colloquy in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1103:39–1104:9 and in Allen Ep 2037:26–9. Superstition prevails 'when everything is sought from saints as though Christ were dead, or when we beg the help of saints as though they were more compassionate than God' (Allen Ep 2443:220–2). So he writes in March 1531 to his friend Jacopo Sadoletto, bishop of Carpentras, replying to a suggestion that he tone down his criticism of abuses. He maintained consistently that while he did not condemn the invoking of saints, the practice is tolerable only if superstition is excluded.

A Spanish translation of this colloquy was made by Alonso Ruiz de Virués c 1529 (*Bataillon Erasme et l'Espagne* xxix, 321).

J.G. Nichols' translation and notes, *Pilgrimages to Saint Mary of Walsingham and Saint Thomas of Canterbury*. By Desiderius Erasmus (London 1849; 2nd ed 1875), C. Eveleigh Woodruff and W. Danks *Memorials of the Cathedral and Priory of Christ in Canterbury* (London 1912), and J.C. Dickinson *The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham* (Cambridge 1956) are valuable for modern students of the colloquy. Important bibliographical aids on Canterbury and Becket are mentioned in the notes to this translation. On Erasmus as pilgrim see L.-E. Halkin 'Erasme pèlerin' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 239–52. A shorter paper by Halkin, 'Le Thème du pèlerinage dans les Colloques d'Erasme,' is printed in *Actes du congrès Erasme* (620 above) 88–98. *Dix conférences sur Erasme* ed Claude Blum (Paris and Geneva 1988) includes a historical and textual analysis of the colloquy by André Godin and a critical essay by Eva Kushner, 'Les Colloques et l'inscription de l'autre dans le discours.'

MENEDEMUS, OGYGIUS¹

- 5 **Menedemus** What marvel is this? Don't I see my neighbour Ogygius, whom nobody has laid eyes on for six whole months? I heard he was dead. It's his very self, unless I'm losing my mind completely.² I'll go to him and say hello. – Greetings, Ogygius.



St James dressed as a pilgrim, wearing on his hat and purse
a cockle-shell badge from the shrine in Compostella, Spain
Miniature in the margin of a fourteenth-century English manuscript
(British Museum Add MS 42130 fol 32 recto)
Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

Ogygius The same to you, Menedemus.

Menedemus Where in the world do you return from, safe and sound? A sad rumour spread here that you'd sailed in Stygian waters.³

Ogygius No, thank heaven; I've seldom enjoyed better health.

- 5 **Menedemus** I hope you'll always be able to refute silly rumours of that sort! But what's this fancy outfit? You're ringed with scallop shells, choked with tin and leaden images on every side, decked out with straw necklaces, and you've snake eggs on your arm.⁴

- 10 **Ogygius** I've been on a visit to St James of Compostella⁵ and, on my way back, to the famous Virgin by the Sea,⁶ in England; or rather I revisited her, since I had gone there three years earlier.⁷

Menedemus Out of curiosity, I dare say.

Ogygius On the contrary, out of devotion.

Menedemus Greek letters, I suppose, taught you that devotion.⁸

- 15 **Ogygius** My wife's mother had bound herself by a vow that if her daughter gave birth to a boy and he lived, I would promptly pay my respects to St James and thank him in person.⁹

Menedemus Did you greet the saint only in your own name and your mother-in-law's?

- 20 **Ogygius** Oh, no, in the whole family's.

Menedemus Well, I imagine your family would have been no less safe even if you had left James ungreeted. But do please tell me: what answer did he make when you thanked him?

- 25 **Ogygius** None, but he seemed to smile as I offered my gift, nodded his head slightly,¹⁰ and at the same time held out the scallop shells.

Menedemus Why does he give those rather than something else?

Ogygius Because he has plenty of them; the sea nearby supplies them.

- 30 **Menedemus** Generous saint, who both attends those in labour and gives presents to callers! But what new kind of vowing is this, that some lazy person lays the work on others? If you bound yourself by a vow that, should *your* affairs prosper, I would fast twice a week, do you think I'd do what you had vowed?

Ogygius No, I don't, even if you'd sworn in your own name. For you enjoy mocking¹¹ the saints. But she's my mother-in-law; she had to be humoured.

- 35 You're acquainted with women's whims, and besides, I had an interest in it too.

Menedemus If you hadn't kept her vow, what risk would there have been?

Ogygius The saint couldn't have sued me at law, I admit, but he could have been deaf thereafter to my prayers or secretly have brought some disaster upon my family. You know the ways of the mighty.

- 40 **Menedemus** Tell me, how is the excellent James?

Ogygius Much colder than usual.

Menedemus Why? Old age?

Ogygius Joker! You know saints don't grow old. But this newfangled notion that pervades the whole world results in his being greeted more seldom than usual. And if people do come, they merely greet him; they make no offering
5 at all, or only a very slight one, declaring it would be better to contribute that money to the poor.¹²

Menedemus A wicked notion!

Ogygius And thus so great an apostle, accustomed to shine from head to foot in gold and jewels, now stands a wooden figure with hardly a tallow
10 candle to his name.¹³

Menedemus If what I hear is true, there's danger that other saints may come to the same pass.

Ogygius More than that: a letter is going round which the Virgin Mary herself wrote on this very theme.¹⁴

15 **Menedemus** Which Mary?

Ogygius The one called Mary from the Rock.

Menedemus Near Basel,¹⁵ unless I'm mistaken.

Ogygius Yes.

Menedemus Then¹⁶ it's a stony saint you tell me of. But to whom did she
20 write?

Ogygius This letter itself tells the name.

Menedemus Who delivered the letter?

Ogygius Undoubtedly an angel, who placed it on the pulpit from which the recipient preaches. And to prevent suspicion of fraud, you shall see the very
25 autograph.¹⁷

Menedemus So you recognize the hand of the angel who is the Virgin's secretary?

Ogygius Why, of course.

Menedemus By what mark?

30 **Ogygius** I've read Bede's epitaph,¹⁸ which was engraved by an angel. The shape of the letters agrees entirely. Also I've read the manuscript message to St¹⁹ Giles. They agree. Aren't these facts proof enough?

Menedemus Is one allowed to see it?

Ogygius Yes, if you'll promise to keep your mouth shut about it.

35 **Menedemus** Oh, to tell me is to tell a stone.²⁰

Ogygius But some stones are notorious for giving secrets away.²¹

Menedemus Then tell it to a mute if you don't trust a stone.

Ogygius On that condition I'll read it. Lend me your ears.²²

Menedemus I've lent them.

40 **Ogygius** Mary, Mother of Jesus, to Glaucoplutus:²³ greetings. Know that I am deeply grateful to you, a follower of Luther,²⁴ for busily persuading

people that the invocation of saints is useless.²⁵ Up to this time I've been all but exhausted by the shameless entreaties of mortals.²⁶ They demanded everything from me alone, as if my Son were always a baby (because he is carved and painted as such at my bosom), still needing his mother's consent
 5 and not daring to deny a person's prayer; fearful, that is, that if he did deny the petitioner something, I for my part would refuse him the breast when he was thirsty. And sometimes they ask of a Virgin what a modest youth would hardly dare ask of a bawd²⁷ – things I'm ashamed to put in writing. Sometimes a merchant, off for Spain to make a fortune, commits to me the chastity of
 10 his mistress. And a nun who has thrown off her veil and is preparing to run away entrusts me with her reputation for virtue – which she herself intends to sully. A profane soldier, hired to butcher people, cries upon me, "Blessed Virgin, give me rich booty."²⁸ A gambler cries, "Help me, blessed saint; I'll share my winnings with you!" And if they lose at dice, they abuse
 15 me outrageously and curse me because I wouldn't favour their wickedness. One²⁹ who abandons herself to a base trade cries, "Give me a fat income!" If I refuse anything, they protest at once, "Then you're no mother of mercy."

'Other people's prayers are not so irreverent as absurd.'³⁰ An unmarried girl cries, "Mary, give me a rich and handsome bridegroom." A married one,
 20 "Give me fine children." A pregnant woman, "Give me an easy delivery." An old woman, "Give me a long life without a cough or a thirst." A doddering old man, "Let me grow young again." A philosopher, "Give me power to contrive insoluble problems." A priest, "Give me a rich benefice." A bishop, "Preserve my church." A sailor, "Give me prosperous sailings." A governor,
 25 "Show me thy Son before I die." A courtier, "Grant that at the point of death I may confess sincerely." A countryman, "Send me rain at the right time." A country woman, "Save the flock and herd from harm." If I deny anything, straightway I'm cruel. If I refer to my Son, I hear, "He wills whatever you will."³¹ So am I alone, a woman and a virgin, to assist those who are sailing,³²
 30 fighting, trading, dicing, marrying, bearing children, to assist governors, kings, and farmers?

'What I've described is very little in comparison with what I endure. But nowadays I'm troubled less by these matters. For this reason I would give you my heartiest thanks, did not this advantage bring a greater disadvantage
 35 along with it. I have more peace but less honour and wealth. Formerly I was hailed as "Queen of Heaven,"³³ mistress of the world"; now I hear scarcely an "Ave Maria" even from a few. Formerly I was clothed in gold and jewels;³⁴ I had many changes of dress; I had golden and jewelled offerings made to me. Now I have hardly half a cloak to wear, and that one is mouse-eaten.
 40 My annual income is scarcely enough to keep the wretched sacristan who lights the little lamp or tallow candle. And yet all these hardships I could



St Bartholomew
Albrecht Dürer, 1523
Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin



St George
Albrecht Altdorfer, 1511
Bruckmann München, Bildarchiv

have borne if you weren't said to be plotting even greater ones. Now you're trying, they say, to remove from the churches all traces of the saints. Do reconsider what you're doing. Other saints have means of avenging injuries. If Peter is ejected from a church, he can in turn shut the gate of heaven
 5 against you.³⁵ Paul has a sword;³⁶ Bartholomew is armed with a knife;³⁷ under his monk's robe William is completely armed, nor does he lack a heavy lance.³⁸ And what could you do against George, with his horse and his coat of mail, his spear and his terrible sword?³⁹ Antony's not defenceless either: he has his sacred fire.⁴⁰ Others likewise have weapons or mischiefs
 10 they direct against anybody they please. But me, however defenceless, you shall not eject unless at the same time you eject my Son, whom I hold in my arms. From him I will not be parted. Either you expel him along with me, or you leave us both here, unless you prefer to have a church without Christ. I wanted you to know this. Think carefully what to answer, for I am deeply
 15 concerned about the matter.

'From our stony house, on the Calends of August,⁴¹ in the year of my Son's passion 1524, I, the Virgin from the Rock,⁴² have signed this with my own hand.'

Menedemus A dreadful, threatening letter indeed. Glaucoplutus will take
 20 warning, I imagine.

Ogygius If he's wise.

Menedemus Why didn't the excellent James write to him on this same subject?

Ogygius I don't know, except that he's rather far away, and all letters are
 25 intercepted nowadays.⁴³

Menedemus But what fortune brought you back to England?

Ogygius An unexpectedly favourable breeze carried me there, and I had virtually promised the Virgin by the Sea that I would pay her another visit in two years.

Menedemus What were you going to ask of her?

Ogygius Nothing new, just the usual things: family safe and sound, a larger fortune, a long and happy life in this world, and eternal bliss in the next.

Menedemus Couldn't the Virgin Mother here at home see to those matters? At Antwerp she has a church much grander than the one by the sea.⁴⁴

Ogygius I can't deny that, but different things are bestowed in different
 35 places, either because she prefers this or (since she is obliging) because she accommodates herself to our feelings in this respect.

Menedemus I've often heard about James, but I beg you to describe for me the domain of the Virgin by the Sea.

Ogygius Well, I'll do the best I can in brief. She has the greatest fame
 40 throughout England, and you would not readily find anyone in that island

who hoped for prosperity unless he greeted her annually with a small gift, according to his means.

Menedemus Where does she live?

5 **Ogygius** By the north-west coast of England, only about three miles from the sea.⁴⁵ The village has scarcely any means of support apart from the tourist trade. There's a college of canons, to whom, however, the Latin title of regulars is added: an order midway between monks and the canons called secular.⁴⁶

Menedemus You tell me of amphibians, such as the beaver.

10 **Ogygius** Yes, and the crocodile. But details aside, I'll try to satisfy you in a few words. In unfavourable matters, they're canons; in favourable ones, monks.⁴⁷

Menedemus So far you're telling me a riddle.

15 **Ogygius** But I'll add a precise demonstration.⁴⁸ If the Roman pontiff assailed all monks with a thunderbolt,⁴⁹ then they'd be canons, not monks. Yet if he permitted all monks to take wives, then they'd be monks.

Menedemus Strange favours! I wish they'd take mine, too.

Ogygius But to get to the point. This college depends almost entirely on the Virgin's generosity for its support.⁵⁰ The larger gifts are reserved, to be sure, 20 but any small change, anything of trifling value, goes towards feeding the community and their head, whom they call the prior.⁵¹

Menedemus Do they live holy lives?

Ogygius They're not without praise. They're richer in piety than income. The church⁵² is fine and splendid, but the Virgin doesn't dwell there; in 25 honour of her Son she yields that to him. She has her own church,⁵³ that she may be on the right of her Son.

Menedemus The right? Which direction does the Son face, then?

Ogygius I'm glad you remind me. When he faces west he has his mother on his right; when he turns to the east she's on the left. However, she doesn't 30 dwell here, either, for the building is not yet finished,⁵⁴ and the place is quite airy – windows and doors open, and Ocean, father of the winds,⁵⁵ nearby.

Menedemus Too bad. So where does she live?

Ogygius In that church, which as I said is unfinished, is a small chapel built on a wooden platform.⁵⁶ Pilgrims are admitted through a narrow door on 35 each side. There's very little light: only what comes from tapers, which have a most pleasing scent.

Menedemus All this is appropriate to religion.

Ogygius Yes, and if you peered inside, Menedemus, you would say it was the abode of the saints, so dazzling is it with jewels, gold, and silver.

40 **Menedemus** You make me impatient to go there.

Ogygius You won't regret the journey.

Menedemus Is there no holy oil there?

Ogygius Silly! That oil exudes only from the tombs of saints, such as Andrew and Catherine.⁵⁷ Mary isn't buried.⁵⁸

Menedemus My mistake, I admit. But finish your story.

- 5 **Ogygius** That the cult may spread more widely, different things are displayed in different places.

Menedemus And, perhaps, that the giving may be more generous; as it is said, 'Gain quickly comes when sought by many hands.'⁵⁹

Ogygius And custodians⁶⁰ are always present.

- 10 **Menedemus** Some of the canons?

Ogygius No, they're not used, lest when serving religion they might stray from devoutness, and while honouring the Virgin pay too little regard to their own virginity.⁶¹ Only in the interior chapel, which I said is the inner sanctum of the Holy Virgin, a canon stands by the altar.

- 15 **Menedemus** What for?

Ogygius To receive and keep the offering.

Menedemus Do people contribute whether they want to or not?⁶²

- Ogygius** Not at all, but a certain pious embarrassment impels some to give when a person's standing by; they wouldn't give if no one were present
20 to watch them. Or they give somewhat more liberally than they would otherwise.

Menedemus That's human nature. I'm no stranger to it.

- Ogygius** Nay, there are some so devoted to the Most Holy Virgin that while they pretend to lay an offering on the altar, they steal, with astonishing
25 nimbleness, what somebody else had placed there.⁶³

Menedemus Suppose there's no witness: would the Virgin strike them dead on the spot?

- Ogygius** Why would the Virgin do that, any more than does the heavenly Father himself, whom men aren't afraid to rob of treasures, even digging
30 through the church wall for the purpose?

Menedemus I can't tell which to be the more astonished at, their impious audacity or God's mildness.

- Ogygius** Then, on the north side – not of the church (don't mistake me) but of the wall enclosing the whole area adjacent to the church – is a certain
35 gateway. It has a tiny door,⁶⁴ the kind noblemen's gates have, so that whoever wants to enter must first expose his shins to danger and then stoop besides.

Menedemus Certainly it wouldn't be safe to go at an enemy through such a door.

- Ogygius** Right. The guide told me that once a knight on horseback escaped
40 through this door from the hands of an enemy who was on the point of overtaking him in his flight. Desperate, he commended himself then and there

to the Holy Virgin, who was close by. For he had determined to take refuge at her altar if the door was open. And mark this wonder: suddenly the knight was entirely within the churchyard and the other man outside, furious.⁶⁵
Menedemus And was this wondrous tale of his believed?

5 **Ogygius** Of course.

Menedemus A rational fellow like you wouldn't accept it so easily.

Ogygius He showed me a copper plate nailed to the door, containing a likeness of the knight who was saved, dressed in the English fashion of that period as we see it in old pictures – and if pictures don't lie, barbers had a
 10 hard time in those days, and so did weavers and dyers.

Menedemus How so?

Ogygius Because the knight was bearded like a goat,⁶⁶ and his clothing didn't have a single pleat and was so tight that it made the body itself thinner. There was another plate, too, showing the size and shape of the
 15 shrine.

Menedemus You had no right to doubt after that.

Ogygius Beneath the little door was an iron grating, admitting you only on foot. It was not seemly that a horse should afterwards trample the spot the horseman had consecrated to the Virgin.

20 **Menedemus** And rightly.

Ogygius To the east is a small chapel,⁶⁷ filled with marvels. I betake myself to it. Another guide receives us. After we've prayed briefly, we're immediately shown the joint of a human finger (the largest of three). I kiss it and then ask whose relics these are. 'St Peter's,' he says.⁶⁸ 'Not the apostle Peter's?'

25 'Yes.' Then looking at the great size of the joint, which might have been a giant's, I said, 'Peter must have been an extremely big man.' At this one of my companions burst into a loud laugh, which annoyed me no end, for if he had been quiet the attendant would have kept none of the relics from our inspection. However, we appeased him as best we could with a tip.

30 In front of the little building was a structure that during the wintertime (he said), when everything was covered by snow, had been brought there suddenly from far away.⁶⁹ Under this were two wells, filled to the top. They say the spring is sacred to the Holy Virgin. It's a wonderfully cold fluid, good for headache and stomach troubles.

35 **Menedemus** If cold water cures headache and stomach troubles, oil will put out fire next.

Ogygius You're hearing about a miracle, my good friend – besides, what would be miraculous about cold water quenching thirst?

Menedemus Clearly this is only one part of the story.

40 **Ogygius** That stream of water, they declared, suddenly shot up from the ground at the command of the Most Holy Virgin. Inspecting everything

carefully I inquired how many years it was since the little house had been brought there. 'Some ages,' he replied. 'In any event,' I said, 'the walls don't look very old.' He didn't deny they had been placed there recently, and the fact was self-evident. 'Then,' I said, 'the roof and thatch of the house seem

5 rather recent.' He agreed, 'Not even these cross-beams, nor the very rafters supporting the roof, appear to have been placed here many years ago.' He nodded. 'But since no part of the building has survived, how is it known for certain,' I asked, 'that this is the cottage brought here from so far away?'

Menedemus How did the attendant get out of that tangle, if you please?

10 **Ogygius** Why, he hurriedly showed us an old, worn-out bearskin⁷⁰ fastened to posts and almost laughed at us for our dullness in being slow to see such a clear proof. So, being persuaded, and excusing our stupidity, we turned to the heavenly milk of the Blessed Virgin.

Menedemus O Mother most like her Son! He left us so much of his blood on earth; she left so much of her milk that it's scarcely credible a woman with only one child could have so much, even if the child had drunk none of it.⁷¹

Ogygius The same thing is said about the Lord's cross, which is exhibited publicly and privately in so many places that if the fragments were joined

20 together they'd seem a full load for a freighter.⁷² And yet the Lord carried his whole cross.

Menedemus Doesn't it seem amazing to you, too?

Ogygius Unusual, perhaps, but by no means amazing, since the Lord, who multiplies these things as he wills, is omnipotent.

25 **Menedemus** You explain it reverently, but for my part I'm afraid many such affairs are contrived for profit.

Ogygius I don't think God will stand for anybody mocking him in that way.

Menedemus On the contrary, though Mother and Son and Father and Spirit

30 are robbed by the sacrilegious, sometimes they don't even bestir themselves slightly enough to frighten off the criminals by a nod or a noise. So great is the mildness of divinity.

Ogygius That's true. But hear the rest. This milk is kept on the high altar, in the midst of which is Christ;⁷³ on the right, for the sake of honour, is his

35 Mother. For the milk represents his Mother.

Menedemus So it's in plain sight.

Ogygius Enclosed in crystal, that is.

Menedemus Therefore liquid.

Ogygius What do you mean, liquid, when it flowed fifteen hundred years ago? It's hard: you'd say powdered chalk, tempered with white of egg.⁷⁴

40

Menedemus Why don't they display it exposed?

Ogygius To save the virginal milk from being defiled by the kisses of men.

Menedemus Well said, for in my opinion there are those who would bring neither clean nor chaste mouths to it.

Ogygius When the guide saw us, he rushed up, donned a linen vestment,
 5 threw a sacred stole around his neck, prostrated himself devoutly, and
 adored. Next he held out the sacred milk for us to kiss. We prostrated
 ourselves devoutly on the lowest step of the altar and, after first saluting
 Christ, addressed to the Virgin a short prayer I had prepared for this
 occasion:⁷⁵ 'Virgin Mother, who hast had the honour of suckling at thy
 10 maidenly breast the Lord of heaven and earth, thy Son Jesus, we pray
 that, cleansed by his blood, we may gain that blessed infancy of dovelike
 simplicity⁷⁶ which, innocent of all malice, deceit, and guile, longs without
 ceasing for the milk of gospel doctrine until it attains to the perfect man, to
 the measure of the fullness of Christ, whose blessed company thou enjoyest
 15 forever, with the Father and Holy Spirit. Amen.'

Menedemus Certainly a devout intercession. What response did she make?

Ogygius Mother and Son both seemed to nod approval, unless my eyes
 deceived me. For the sacred milk appeared to leap up, and the Eucharistic
 elements gleamed somewhat more brightly. Meanwhile the custodian
 20 approached us, quite silent, but holding out a board⁷⁷ like those used in
 Germany by toll collectors on bridges.

Menedemus Yes, I've often cursed those greedy boards when travelling
 through Germany.

Ogygius We gave him some coins, which he offered to the Virgin.
 25 Next, through an interpreter who understands the language well (a
 smooth-tongued young man named Robert Aldridge, I believe),⁷⁸ I inquired
 as civilly as I could what proof he had that this was the Virgin's milk.⁷⁹ I
 wanted to know this clearly for the pious purpose of stopping the mouths of
 certain unbelievers who are accustomed to laugh at all these matters. At first
 30 the guide frowned and said nothing. I told the interpreter to press him, but
 even more politely. He did so with the utmost grace, such that if with words
 of that sort he had entreated the Mother herself, recently out of childbed,
 she would not have taken offence. But the guide, as if possessed, gazed at us
 in astonishment, and as though horrified by such blasphemous speech, said,
 35 'What need is there to inquire into that when you have an authentic record?'
 And it looked very much as if he would throw us out as heretics, except that
 we calmed the fellow's wrath with a bit of money.

Menedemus What did you do then?

Ogygius What do you suppose we did? As though beaten with a club, or
 40 struck by a thunderbolt, we took ourselves out of there, humbly begging
 pardon (as one should in sacred matters) for such outrageous presumption.

Thence on to the little chapel, the dwelling-place of the Holy Virgin. At our approach a priest⁸⁰ turns up, one of the minor canons,⁸¹ and gazes at us as though studying us; after we go a little farther a second one turns up, likewise staring at us; then a third.

5 **Menedemus** Perhaps they wanted to draw you.

Ogygius But I suspected something very different.

Menedemus What was that?

Ogygius That a sacrilegious person had filched something from the Holy Virgin's ornaments, and that their suspicion was directed against me. So
10 when I entered the chapel I greeted the Virgin Mother with a short prayer, like this: 'O thou alone of all womankind Mother and Virgin, Mother most blessed, purest of maidens, we who are unclean come now unto thee who art pure. We bless thee, we worship thee as best we can with our poor gifts. May thy Son grant us that, by emulating thy most blessed life, we too, through
15 the grace of the Holy Spirit, may be made worthy to conceive the Lord Jesus spiritually in our inmost hearts, and never lose him once conceived. Amen.' Kissing the altar at the same time, I laid some coins upon it and went away.

Menedemus What did the Virgin do at this? Didn't she indicate by the slightest nod that your short prayer was heard?

20 **Ogygius** As I told you, there was a dim religious light, and she stood in the shadows, to the right of the altar. Finally, the first custodian's harangue had so squelched me that I didn't dare lift my eyes.

Menedemus So this expedition didn't end very happily.

Ogygius On the contrary, quite happily.

25 **Menedemus** You've brought me back to life, for 'my heart had fallen to my knees,' as your Homer says.⁸²

Ogygius After lunch we went back to the church.

Menedemus You dared to, when you were suspected of sacrilege?

Ogygius That may be, but I was not suspect in my own eyes. A good
30 conscience knows no fear.⁸³ I wanted to see the 'record' to which the guides had referred us. After searching for it a long time, we found it, but hung so high it could not be read by just any eyes. I'm no Lynceus so far as eyes are concerned,⁸⁴ nor am I totally blind, either.⁸⁵ So as Aldridge read, I followed along, not trusting him completely in so vital a matter.

35 **Menedemus** Were all your doubts cleared up?

Ogygius I was ashamed of having doubted, so clearly was the whole thing set forth before my eyes – the name, the place, the story, told in order.⁸⁶ In a word, nothing was omitted. There was said to be a certain William of Paris, a holy man, inasmuch as from time to time he was remarkably devoted to
40 searching the world over for saints' relics. After travelling through many lands, visiting monasteries and churches everywhere, he came at length to

Constantinople, where his brother was bishop. When William was preparing to return, his brother confided to him that a certain nun had the milk of the Virgin Mother and that he would be extremely blessed ever afterwards if by prayer, purchase, or artifice he could get hold of a portion of it. All other
 5 relics he had collected to date were as nothing compared with this sacred milk. From that moment William could not rest until by his begging he won half of this milk. With this treasure he thought himself richer than Croesus.⁸⁷

Menedemus Why not? And beyond expectation, too.

Ogygius He headed straight home, but a fatal illness stopped him short.

10 **Menedemus** How brief and limited is human happiness!

Ogygius Aware of the danger, he summons a fellow pilgrim, a most reliable Frenchman. Swearing him to secrecy, he entrusts the milk to him on condition that if he reaches home safely he is to place this treasure on the altar of the Holy Virgin who dwells in the great church in Paris overlooking
 15 the Seine, which flows by on each side;⁸⁸ the river itself seems to give way in honour of the Virgin's sanctity. To make a long story short, William is buried; the other hurries on; and disease takes him, too. In despair of his life, he gives the milk to an English companion but binds him by many oaths to do what he himself had intended to do. He dies; the other takes the milk
 20 and places it on the altar in the presence of the canons there (formerly called regulars, as they are yet at St Genevieve's).⁸⁹ From them he begged half of the milk. This he carried to England and finally brought to St Mary by the Sea, summoned to this place by divine inspiration.

Menedemus Surely this story is very consistent.

25 **Ogygius** More than that: lest any uncertainty remain, there were inscribed, above, the names of suffragan bishops who grant indulgences⁹⁰ as extensive as their supply affords⁹¹ to those who come to see the milk and don't neglect to leave a small offering.

Menedemus How much do they grant?

30 **Ogygius** Forty days.

Menedemus Are there days even in the underworld?

Ogygius There's time, certainly.

Menedemus Once the whole supply's been granted, is there none left to give out?

35 **Ogygius** On the contrary; what they grant is inexhaustible. And obviously this is different from what happens to the jar of the Danaides, since that, though continuously filled, is always empty;⁹² but as for this, if you always drain it, still the jar's no emptier.

Menedemus If forty days apiece are granted to a hundred thousand men,
 40 each man has just the same?

Ogygius Yes.

Menedemus And if those who received forty days before lunch were to ask for the same number again at dinner-time it would be at hand to bestow?

Ogygius Oh, yes, even if they asked for it ten times an hour.⁹³

Menedemus I wish I had such a money box at home! I'd ask merely for
5 three shillings if only they renewed themselves.

Ogygius Why don't you choose to turn into gold completely, since you can do the same again whenever you wish? But to return to the 'record.' The following point was added with pious simplicity: that although the Virgin's milk shown in a great many other places was of course to be revered,
10 nevertheless this was to be venerated more than that elsewhere, because that was scraped from rocks whereas this flowed from the Virgin's own breasts.

Menedemus How was this known?

Ogygius Oh, the nun of Constantinople, who gave the milk, said so.

Menedemus And perhaps St Bernard informed her?

15 **Ogygius** That's what I think.

Menedemus The one who in old age was privileged to taste milk from that same breast which the child Jesus sucked.⁹⁴ Hence I'm surprised he's called 'the mellifluous' instead of 'the lactifluous.'⁹⁵ But how can that be called the Virgin's milk which did not flow from her breasts?

20 **Ogygius** It did flow, but falling on the rock where she happened to be sitting when giving suck, it hardened and then, by God's will, so increased.

Menedemus Right. Continue.

Ogygius After this, while we're strolling about, looking at sights of interest before departing, the custodians turn up again, glance at us, point with the
25 finger, run up, go away, rush back, nod; they seemed to be on the point of accosting us if they could find courage enough.

Menedemus Weren't you at all scared then?

Ogygius Oh, no, I looked them straight in the eye, smiling and gazing at them as if inviting them to address me. At last one comes near and asks my
30 name. I give it. He asks if I was the man who two years earlier had put up a votive tablet in Hebrew.⁹⁶ I admit it.

Menedemus Do you write Hebrew?

Ogygius Of course not, but anything they don't understand they call Hebrew. Soon the protos-hysteros⁹⁷ of the college comes – having been sent
35 for, I imagine.

Menedemus What title is that? Haven't they an abbot?

Ogygius No.

Menedemus Why?

Ogygius Because they don't know Hebrew.⁹⁸

40 **Menedemus** Nor a bishop?

Ogygius No.

Menedemus Why?

Ogygius Because the Virgin is still too hard up to buy an expensive staff and mitre.

Menedemus Haven't they at least a provost?

5 **Ogygius** Not even that.

Menedemus Why not?

Ogygius Because 'provost' is a title designating office, not sanctity.⁹⁹ And that's why colleges of canons reject the name of 'abbot,' while willingly accepting 'provost'.¹⁰⁰

10 **Menedemus** But 'protos-hysteros' I never heard of before.

Ogygius Really, you're very ignorant of grammar.

Menedemus I do know 'hysteron proteron'¹⁰¹ in figures of speech.

Ogygius Exactly. The man next to the prior is posterior-prior.

Menedemus You mean a *subprior*.¹⁰²

15 **Ogygius** This man greeted me quite courteously. He tells me how hard many persons toil to read those lines and how often they wipe their spectacles in vain. Whenever some aged DD or LLD came along he was marched off to the tablet. One would say the letters were Arabic; another, that they were fictitious characters. Finally one was found who could read the title. It was
20 written in Roman words and letters, but in capitals. The Greek lines were written in Greek capitals, which at first glance look like Latin capitals. Upon request, I gave the meaning of the verses in Latin, translating word for word. I firmly refused the small tip proffered for this bit of work, declaring there was nothing, however difficult, that I would not be very eager to do for the
25 sake of the Most Holy Virgin, even if she bade me carry a letter from there to Jerusalem.

Menedemus Why would she need you as postman when she has so many angels to wait on her hand and foot?

30 **Ogygius** He offered from his bag a piece of wood, cut from a beam on which the Virgin Mother was seen to stand. A marvellous fragrance proved at once that the object was an extremely sacred one.¹⁰³ After kissing so remarkable a gift three or four times with the utmost devotion, while prone and bareheaded, I put it in my purse.

Menedemus May one see it?

35 **Ogygius** I'll let you see it. But if you aren't fasting, or if you had intercourse with your wife last night, I shouldn't advise you to look at it.¹⁰⁴

Menedemus No danger. Show it to me.

Ogygius Here you are.

Menedemus How lucky you are to have this present!

40 **Ogygius** In case you don't know, I wouldn't exchange this tiny fragment for all the gold in Tagus.¹⁰⁵ I'll set it in gold, but so that it shines through crystal.



Women lighting candles before an image of the Virgin
Drawing by Hans Holbein the Younger in the margin of a copy
of the 1515 Froben edition of *Moriae encomium* (fol M verso)
Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kupferstichkabinett

Then Hystero-protos, when he saw that I was so reverently delighted with this little gift and decided I was not undeserving of having greater matters entrusted to me as well, asked whether I had ever seen the secrets of the Virgin. This language startled me somewhat, but I didn't dare ask which secrets of the Virgin he meant, since in subjects so sacred even a slip of the tongue can be dangerous. I say I haven't seen them but that I want to very much. I'm led on now as though divinely inspired. One or two wax tapers are lighted and a small image displayed, unimpressive in size, material, and workmanship but of surpassing power.

- 10 **Menedemus** Size has little to do with producing miracles. I've seen the Christopher at Paris, not merely a wagon-load or a colossus in size but fully as big as a mountain¹⁰⁶ – yet he was distinguished for no miracles that I ever heard of.

- 15 **Ogygius** At the Virgin's feet is a jewel, as yet unnamed by Latins or Greeks. The French have named it from 'toad,' because it shows the figure of a toad in a way no art could achieve.¹⁰⁷ What's more wonderful, the stone is very small; the image of the toad does not stick out but shines through in the jewel itself, as if inlaid.

- 20 **Menedemus** Perhaps they imagine the toad's likeness, as we imagine an eagle in a stalk of fern. And similarly, what don't children see in clouds: dragons breathing fire, mountains burning, armed men clashing.¹⁰⁸

Ogygius For your information, no toad shows itself more obviously alive than that one did.

- 25 **Menedemus** So far I've put up with your stories. From now on, look for someone else to convince with your toad yarn.

- 30 **Ogygius** No wonder you feel like that, Menedemus. Nobody could have persuaded me either, even if the whole faculty of theology had maintained it, unless I had seen it, inspected it, and made certain of it with these eyes – these very eyes, I tell you. But you do strike me as rather lacking in curiosity about natural history.

Menedemus Why? Because I don't believe asses fly?

- 35 **Ogygius** Don't you see how Nature the artist enjoys expressing herself in the colours and forms of everything, but especially in jewels? Then, how marvellous the powers she put into those jewels: well-nigh incredible, did not firsthand experience give us assurance of them. Tell me, would you have believed steel is pulled by a magnet without being touched, and repelled by it again without contact, unless you had seen it with your own eyes?

Menedemus No, never, even if ten Aristotles had sworn it to me.

- 40 **Ogygius** Then don't cry 'Incredible!' as soon as you hear about something not yet known by experience.¹⁰⁹ In *ceraunia* we see the figure of a thunderbolt;¹¹⁰ in *pyropus*, living fire;¹¹¹ in *chalazias*, the appearance and hardness of hail,

even if you throw it into the midst of the fire; in the emerald, deep, clear sea water.¹¹² *Carcinias* resembles a sea crab; adderstone, a viper; *scarites*, the fish called scarus; *hieracites*, a falcon. *Geranites* has a neck like the crane's; *aegophthalmus*, a goat's eye (one kind shows a pig's eye, another three human eyes together); *lycophthalmus* paints the eye of a wolf in four colours: golden red, blood red, and in the middle black bordered by white. If you open *cyamea nigra*, you'll find a bean in the centre. *Dryites* looks like a tree trunk and burns like wood. *Cissites* and *narcissites* depict ivy; *astrapias* throws out flashes of lightning from its white or lapis-lazuli centre; *phlegontes* shows inside the colour of flame, which does not die out; in the carbuncle stone¹¹³ you see certain sparks darting; *crocias* has the colour of a crocus; *rhodites*, of a rose; *chalcites*, of brass. Eaglestone represents an eagle with a whitish tail;¹¹⁴ *taos* has the image of a peacock; swallowstone,¹¹⁵ that of an asp. *Myrmecites* contains the figure of a creeping ant; *cantharias* shows a complete beetle;¹¹⁶ *scorpites* illustrates a scorpion remarkably. But why pursue these examples, which are countless, since Nature has no part – in the elements, in living things, or in plants – that it does not illustrate, as if in sport, in precious stones. Do you wonder that a toad is imaged in this jewel?

Menedemus I wonder that Nature has so much leisure to play thus at imitating everything.

Ogygius She wanted to arouse the curiosity of mankind, and so to shake us out of our idleness. And yet – as though we had no way of escaping boredom – we go crazy over jesters, dice, and jugglers' tricks.

Menedemus Very true.

Ogygius Some sober people say that if stones of this kind are put in vinegar, the 'toads' will move their legs and swim.

Menedemus Why is a toad set before the Virgin?¹¹⁷

Ogygius Because she overcame, stamped out, extinguished all impurity, infection, pride, avarice, and whatever earthly passions there are.

Menedemus Woe to us who bear so great a toad in our breasts!

Ogygius We shall be pure if we worship the Virgin zealously.

Menedemus How does she like to be worshipped?

Ogygius You will adore her most acceptably if you imitate her.¹¹⁸

Menedemus Precisely¹¹⁹ – but that's very hard to do.

Ogygius Yes, but most glorious.

Menedemus Go on; continue what you began.

Ogygius Next he shows us gold and silver statues.¹²⁰ 'This one,' says he, 'is all gold; the other one, silver gilded.' He adds the weight and worth of each, and the name of the donor. When, marvelling at every one, I was congratulating the Virgin on such fortunate wealth,¹²¹ the guide said: 'Since I notice you're a devout sightseer, I don't think it right to keep anything from

you: you shall see the Virgin's very greatest secrets.' At the same time he takes down from the altar itself a world of wonderful things. If I tried to enumerate them all, the day would not be long enough. Thus the pilgrimage ended very happily for me. I had my fill of sights, and I brought away with

5 me this priceless gift, a pledge from the Virgin herself.

Menedemus Didn't you test the power of your piece of wood?¹²²

Ogygius I did. Before three days passed, I found at a certain inn a man who had gone mad; they were ready to chain him.¹²³ I slipped this wood under his pillow secretly. He fell into a long, deep sleep. In the morning he woke

10 up as sound as ever.

Menedemus Maybe it wasn't insanity but delirium tremens from drink. Sleep usually helps that malady.

Ogygius Joke as you please, Menedemus, but about something else. To make fun of the saints is neither reverent nor prudent. Why, the man himself

15 said that a woman of marvellous beauty had appeared to him in a dream and held out a cup to him.

Menedemus Hellebore, I dare say.¹²⁴

Ogygius I don't know about that, but I do know the man's in his right mind.

Menedemus Did you overlook Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury?

20 **Ogygius** By no means. No pilgrimage is more devout.

Menedemus I long to hear about it, if that's not too much trouble.

Ogygius Oh, no, I want you to hear. There's a part of England called Kent, facing France and Flanders; its metropolis¹²⁵ is Canterbury. In it are two monasteries, almost adjacent, both of them Benedictine houses. That named

25 for St Augustine¹²⁶ is evidently older; the one now called after St Thomas appears¹²⁷ to have been the archbishop's see, where he used to live with a few chosen monks¹²⁸ – just as today, too, bishops have residences adjoining the churches but separate from the houses of other canons. (In old times both bishops and canons were usually monks;¹²⁹ evidence abounds to prove that.)

30 The church dedicated to St Thomas rises to the sky so majestically that it inspires devotion even in those who see it from afar. Thus by its splendour it now dims the glory of the neighbouring one and, so to speak, overshadows the spot that was anciently the most sacred. It has two huge towers,¹³⁰ as though greeting visitors a long way off and making the region ring far and

35 wide with the wonderful resonance of its bronze bells. At the south entrance of the church are stone statues of the three armed men who with sacrilegious hands murdered the blessed saint. Their surnames are added: Tusci, Fusci, Berri.¹³¹

Menedemus Why is so much honour paid to impious men?

40 **Ogygius** Obviously they have the same honour as Judas, Pilate, and Caiaphas, that band of accursed soldiers whom you see carefully carved on

gilded altars. The surnames are added lest anybody in the future speak well of them. Attention is called to them in order that hereafter no courtier lift a hand against bishops or church property. For those three conspirators went mad after committing their crime,¹³² and would not have recovered had they

5 not begged help of the most holy Thomas.

Menedemus O the everlasting mercy of martyrs!

Ogygius When you enter,¹³³ the spacious grandeur of the building is disclosed. This part is open to the public.

Menedemus Is there nothing to see there?

10 **Ogygius** Nothing but the mass of the structure and some books – among them the Gospel of Nicodemus¹³⁴ – chained to pillars, and a tomb, I don't know whose.

Menedemus Then what?

Ogygius Iron screens prevent you from going further,¹³⁵ but they permit a
15 view of the space between the end of the building and the choir, as it is called. This is ascended by many steps, under which a certain vault gives access to the north side.¹³⁶ A wooden altar sacred to the Holy Virgin is shown there,¹³⁷ a very small one, not worth seeing except as a monument of antiquity, a rebuke to the luxury of our times. There the holy man is said to have spoken
20 his last farewell to the Virgin when death was at hand. On the altar is the point of the sword with which the crown of the good bishop's head was cut off, and his brain smashed, evidently to make death come more quickly.¹³⁸ Out of love for the martyr we reverently kissed the sacred rust of his sword.

Leaving this place, we went down into the crypt.¹³⁹ It has its own
25 custodians. First is shown the martyr's skull, pierced through.¹⁴⁰ The top of the cranium is bared for kissing; the rest covered with silver. Along with this is displayed a leaden plate with 'Thomas of Acre'¹⁴¹ carved on it. The hair shirt,¹⁴² girdle, and drawers by which the bishop used to subdue his flesh hang in the gloom there – horrible even to look at and a reproach to our
30 softness and delicacy.

Menedemus Perhaps to the monks themselves, too.

Ogygius I can neither affirm nor deny that, nor is it any of my business.

Menedemus Very true.

Ogygius From here we return to the choir.¹⁴³ On the north side mysteries
35 are laid open. It is wonderful how many bones were brought forth – skulls, jaws, teeth, hands, fingers, whole arms,¹⁴⁴ all of which we adored and kissed. This would have gone on forever if my fellow pilgrim, an unobliging chap, had not cut short the enthusiasm of the guide.

Menedemus Who was this?

40 **Ogygius** An Englishman named Gratian Pullus,¹⁴⁵ a learned and upright man but less respectful towards this side of religion than I liked.

Menedemus Some Wycliffite, I suppose.

Ogygius I don't think so, although he had read his books.¹⁴⁶ Where he got hold of them isn't clear.

Menedemus Did he offend the custodian?

5 **Ogygius** An arm was brought forth, with the bloodstained flesh still on it. He shrank from kissing this, looking rather disgusted. The custodian soon put his things away. Next we viewed the altar table and ornaments;¹⁴⁷ then the objects that were kept under the altar¹⁴⁸ – all of them splendid; you'd say Midas and Croesus were beggars if you saw the quantity of gold and
10 silver.¹⁴⁹

Menedemus No kisses here?

Ogygius No, but a different sort of desire came to my mind.

Menedemus What?

Ogygius I was sad because I had no such relics at home.¹⁵⁰

15 **Menedemus** An unholy thought!

Ogygius Admitted, and I begged the saint's forgiveness before leaving the church. After this we were conducted to the sacristy.¹⁵¹ Good Lord, what an array of silk vestments there, what an abundance of gold candelabra! There too we saw St Thomas' staff.¹⁵² It looked like a cane plated with silver. It was
20 not at all heavy, had no ornamentation, and was no more than waist-high.

Menedemus No cross?

Ogygius None that I saw. We were shown a pallium,¹⁵³ silk to be sure, but coarse, without gold or jewels, and there was a face-cloth,¹⁵⁴ soiled by sweat from his neck and preserving obvious spots of blood. These memorials of
25 the plain living of olden times we gladly kissed.

Menedemus They're not shown to everyone?

Ogygius Certainly not, my good friend.

Menedemus How was it you were trusted so much that no secrets were kept from you?

30 **Ogygius** I had some acquaintance with the Reverend Father William Warham, the archbishop.¹⁵⁵ He gave me a note of recommendation.

Menedemus I hear from many persons that he is a man of remarkable kindness.

Ogygius More than that: you would call him kindness itself if you knew
35 him. His learning, integrity, and holiness of life are so great that you would find him lacking in no quality befitting an ideal prelate. – Next we were led up above, for behind the high altar you ascend as though into a new church. There in a small chapel is shown the entire countenance of the saint, gilded and ornamented with many jewels.¹⁵⁶ Here a certain unlooked-for accident
40 almost upset all our good luck.

Menedemus I'm waiting to hear what misfortune you mean.

Ogygius My friend Gratian was far from gracious on this occasion.¹⁵⁷ After a short prayer he asked the keeper, 'I say, good father, is it true, as I've heard, that in his lifetime Thomas was most generous to the poor?' 'Very true,' the man replied, and began to rehearse the saint's many acts of kindness to them. Then Gratian: 'I don't suppose his disposition changed in this matter, unless perhaps for the better.' The custodian agreed. Gratian again: 'Since, then, the saint was so liberal towards the needy, though he was still poor himself and lacked money to provide for the necessities of life, don't you think he'd gladly consent, now that he's so rich and needs nothing, if some poor wretched woman with hungry children at home, or daughters in danger of losing their virtue because they have no money for dowries, or a husband sick in bed and penniless – if, after begging the saint's forgiveness, she carried off a bit of all this wealth to rescue her family, as though taking from one who wanted her to have it, either as a gift or a loan?' When the keeper in charge of the gilded head made no reply to this, Gratian, who's impulsive, said, 'For my part, I'm convinced the saint would rejoice that in death, too, he could relieve the wants of the poor by his riches.'¹⁵⁸ At this the custodian frowned and pursed his lips, looking at us with Gorgon eyes,¹⁵⁹ and I don't doubt he would have driven us from the church with insults and reproaches had he not been aware that we were recommended by the archbishop. I managed to placate the fellow somehow by smooth talk, affirming that Gratian hadn't spoken seriously but liked to joke; and at the same time I gave him some coins.

Menedemus I quite approve of your sense of duty. But seriously, I wonder sometimes what possible excuse there could be for those who spend so much money on building, decorating, and enriching churches that there's simply no limit to it. Granted that the sacred vestments and vessels of the church must have a dignity appropriate to their liturgical use; and I want the building to have grandeur. But what's the use of so many baptistries, candelabra, gold statues?¹⁶⁰ What's the good of the vastly expensive organs, as they call them? (We're not content with a single set, either.) What's the good of that costly musical neighing when meanwhile our brothers and sisters, Christ's living temples, waste away from neglect and starvation?¹⁶¹

Ogygius Every decent, sensible man favours moderation in these matters, of course. But since the fault springs from excessive devotion, it merits applause; especially when one thinks of the opposite vice in those who rob churches of their wealth. These gifts are generally given by kings and potentates and would be worse spent on gambling and war. And if you try to rid the churches of any of these things, that, in the first place, is regarded as sacrilege; next, those who are regular contributors stop their giving;

above all, men are incited to robbery. Hence churchmen are custodians of these things rather than owners of them. In short, I'd rather see a church abounding in sacred furnishings than bare and dirty,¹⁶² as some are, and more like stables than churches.

5 **Menedemus** Yet we read that in former times bishops were praised for selling the sacred vessels and using the money to relieve the poor.¹⁶³

Ogygius They're praised today, too, but only praised. In my judgment, they neither can, nor want to, imitate them.

Menedemus I'm holding up your story. Let's have the *dénouement*.¹⁶⁴

10 **Ogygius** Hear it, then; I'll be brief. While this was going on, the chief official came forward.

Menedemus Who? The abbot of the place?

Ogygius He has a mitre and abbatial revenue; he lacks only the name of abbot and is called prior,¹⁶⁵ because the archbishop serves instead of an abbot.¹⁶⁶

15 In ancient times whoever was archbishop of this diocese was also a monk.

Menedemus Well, I wouldn't mind being called camel if I had an abbot's income.

Ogygius He seemed to me a good, sensible man; something of a Scotist theologian, too.¹⁶⁷ He opened for us the chest in which the rest of the holy
20 man's body is said to lie.

Menedemus You saw the bones?

Ogygius No, that's not permitted, nor would it be possible without the use of ladders. But the wooden chest conceals a golden chest; when this is drawn up by ropes, it reveals inestimable treasure.¹⁶⁸

25 **Menedemus** What do I hear?

Ogygius The cheapest part was gold. Everything shone and dazzled with rare and surpassingly large jewels, some bigger than a goose egg.¹⁶⁹ Some monks stood about reverently. When the cover was removed, we all adored. The prior pointed out each jewel by touching it with a white rod, adding its
30 French name, its worth, and the name of the donor. The principal ones were gifts from kings.

Menedemus He must have a remarkable memory.

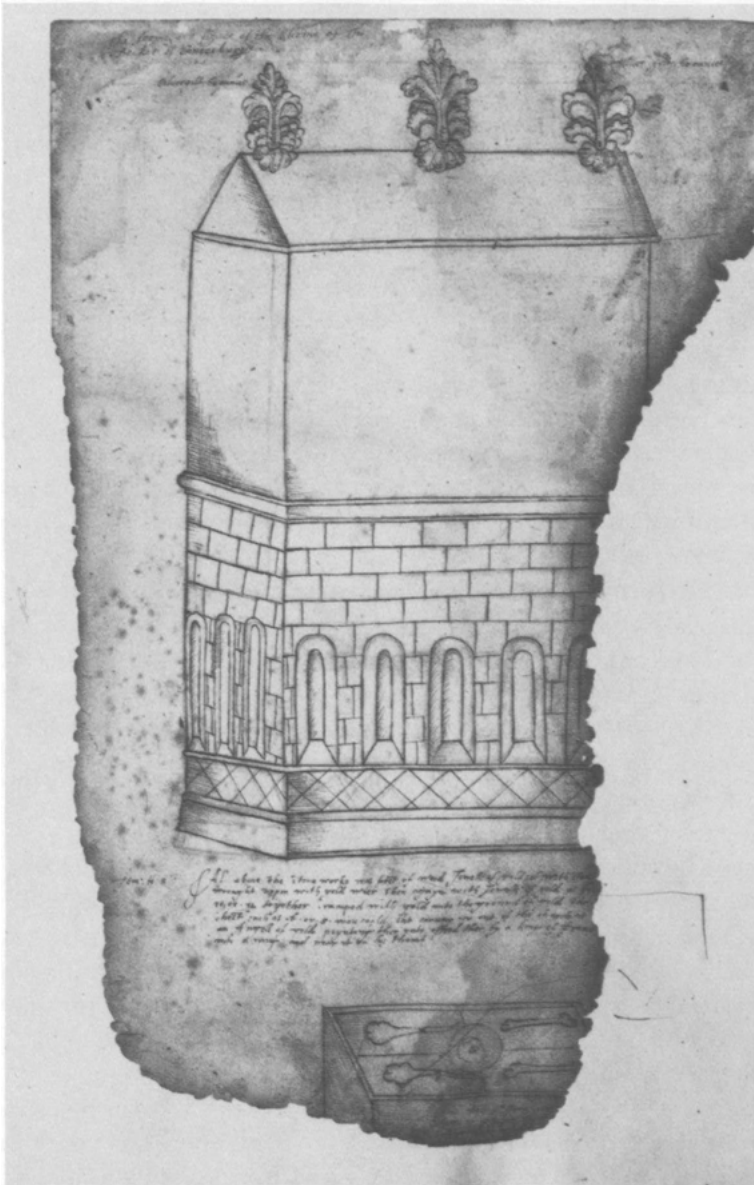
Ogygius Your guess is correct, though practice helps too, for he often does this. From here he leads the way back to the crypt. There the Virgin Mother
35 has a residence, but a somewhat dark one, twice enclosed by iron screens.

Menedemus What's she afraid of?

Ogygius Only robbers, I suppose, for I've never seen anything more loaded with riches.

Menedemus You tell me of dark riches.

40 **Ogygius** When the lanterns were brought closer, we saw a more than regal sight.



An antiquary's drawing, date unknown, of the shrine of Archbishop Thomas Becket. The lower part, of stone, contained the treasures. Beneath them was a box containing Becket's bones. When the shrine was destroyed in 1538, the treasures were seized by the government, and it was said the bones were burned.
 Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

Menedemus More wealth than that of St Mary by the Sea?

Ogygius It looks like much more. She alone knows her secret wealth. It isn't shown to any but persons of the highest importance or to special friends. At last we were led back to the sacristy. There a chest with a black leather cover
 5 was brought out, placed on the table, and opened. Immediately everyone worshipped on bended knee.

Menedemus What was inside?

Ogygius Some linen rags, many of them still showing traces of snivel.¹⁷⁰ With these, they say, the holy man wiped the sweat from his face or neck,
 10 the dirt from his nose, or whatever other kinds of filth human bodies have. At this point my friend Gratian again displayed something less than graciousness.¹⁷¹ To him, since he was English and a well-known person of considerable standing, the prior kindly offered one of the rags as a gift, thinking he was making him a present that would please him very much.
 15 But Gratian was hardly grateful for it. He touched the piece with his fingers, not without a sign of disgust, and put it back scornfully, puckering his lips as though whistling. (This is what he ordinarily did if he came across anything he thought contemptible.) Shame and alarm together embarrassed me dreadfully. But the prior, no fool, pretended not to notice this incident,
 20 and after offering us a glass of wine dismissed us kindly, for we were returning to London.

Menedemus Why did you have to do that when you were already fairly close to your own shore?

Ogygius Yes, I was, but I willingly avoided that shore as much as possible.
 25 It's more notorious for frauds and robberies than any Malean rocks are for shipwrecks.¹⁷² I'll tell you what I saw on my last crossing.¹⁷³ Many of us were ferried in a boat from the Calais shore to a larger vessel. Among the passengers was a poor ragged French youth. He was charged sixpence;¹⁷⁴ so large a sum do they wring from each passenger for the very short ride. He
 30 pleaded poverty. To amuse themselves they search him, and when they pull off his shoes they find ten or twelve shillings between the soles. These they take, laughing in his face and jeering at the damned Frenchman.

Menedemus What did the young fellow do?

Ogygius Mourned his loss. What else could he do?

35 **Menedemus** They had no right to do such things, had they?

Ogygius Exactly the same right they have to rob passengers' luggage and to snatch purses whenever they get a chance.

Menedemus It's extraordinary that they should dare to commit such a serious crime in the presence of so many witnesses.

40 **Ogygius** They're so used to doing it that they think it's quite all right. Many persons watched from the larger boat. In the small boat were some English

merchants, who protested in vain. Those fellows boasted about catching the damned Frenchman as if it were a practical joke.

Menedemus I'd gladly crucify those pirates as a practical joke!

5 **Ogygius** But both shores are full of such men. Guess 'what masters could do when knaves dare do such deeds.'¹⁷⁵ So from now on I prefer roundabout routes to that short cut. In these respects, just as 'the descent to hell is easy' but the return extremely difficult,¹⁷⁶ so entry by this shore is not altogether easy, exit very hard. Some sailors from Antwerp were hanging about London; I decided to take my sailing chances with them.

10 **Menedemus** Does that place have such conscientious sailors?

Ogygius As an ape is always an ape,¹⁷⁷ I confess, so a sailor's always a sailor.¹⁷⁸ But if you compare them with professional thieves, they're angels.

Menedemus I'll remember that if ever I, too, get the urge to visit that island. But go back to the road I took you away from.

15 **Ogygius** On the way to London, shortly after you leave Canterbury, you find a very deep and narrow road; moreover, it has such steep banks on each side that you can't get out of it. There's no other road you can take, either. On the left side of this road is a little almshouse for some old beggars.¹⁷⁹ As soon as they see a rider coming one of them runs up, sprinkles him with holy
20 water, and presently holds out the upper part of a shoe fastened to a brass rim. In it is a glass that looks like a jewel.¹⁸⁰ People kiss it and make a small contribution.

Menedemus On that sort of road I'd rather meet a house of old beggars than a gang of able-bodied thieves.

25 **Ogygius** Gratian was riding on my left, closer to the almshouse. He was sprinkled with water but he managed to put up with that. When the shoe was thrust at him, he asked the man what he meant by this. He said it was St Thomas' shoe. Gratian turned to me and said heatedly, 'What, do these brutes want us to kiss all good men's shoes? Why not, in the same fashion,
30 hold out spittle and other excrements to be kissed?' I felt sorry for the old man and cheered him up with a bit of money, poor fellow.¹⁸¹

Menedemus In my opinion, Gratian's anger was not entirely unreasonable. If soles of shoes were kept as evidence of a simple life, I wouldn't object, but I consider it shameless to push soles, shoes, and drawers at one to be kissed.
35 If one kissed them of his own accord, from some strong feeling of piety, I'd think it pardonable.¹⁸²

Ogygius I won't pretend it wouldn't be better to leave those things undone, but from what can't be amended at a stroke I'm accustomed to take whatever good there is. – Meantime, I was pleasing myself with
40 the reflection that a good man is like a sheep, a bad one like a beast of prey. When an adder's dead, it can't sting, true, but its stench and

blood are injurious. A sheep, while alive, nourishes by its milk, provides clothing by its wool, enriches by its offspring; dead, it furnishes useful hide; and all of it can be eaten. So rapacious men, addicted to this world, are troublesome to everybody while alive; when dead, they're a nuisance to the living by reason of the tolling of bells, grandiose funerals,¹⁸³ and sometimes by the consecration of their successors – because that means new exactions. Good men, truly, are in every respect useful to everyone: as this saint, during his lifetime, encouraged people to godliness by his example, teaching, and exhortations, comforted the forsaken, and raised up the needy. In death his usefulness was almost greater. He built this very wealthy church;¹⁸⁴ he strengthened considerably the power of the priesthood throughout England.¹⁸⁵ Lastly, this piece of shoe supports a house of poor men.

Menedemus A noble thought indeed, but since you're of that mind I'm surprised you've never visited St Patrick's cave,¹⁸⁶ of which some marvellous tales are told. To me they're not entirely plausible.

Ogygius On the contrary, no story about it can be so marvellous that it is not surpassed by the fact itself.

Menedemus And have you been in it, then?

Ogygius I sailed in Stygian waters, to be sure; I went down into the jaws of Avernus;¹⁸⁷ I saw what goes on in hell.

Menedemus You'll do me a favour if you'll be kind enough to tell me about it.

Ogygius Let this serve as prologue to our conversation – and it's long enough, in my opinion. I'm on my way home to order dinner, for I've had no lunch.

Menedemus Why haven't you? Not because of religious observance.

Ogygius Oh, no, because of a grudge.

Menedemus A grudge against your belly?

Ogygius No, against greedy tavern keepers who, though they won't serve a decent meal, don't hesitate to charge their guests outrageous prices.¹⁸⁸ I get even with them in this way: if I expect a good dinner with an acquaintance, or at an innkeeper's who is a little less niggardly, my stomach won't stand much lunch, but if luck has provided the sort of lunch I like, I get a stomach-ache at dinner-time.

Menedemus Aren't you ashamed to seem so stingy and mean?

Ogygius Menedemus, those who take shame into account in such matters, believe me, are bad accountants. I've learned to keep my shame for other purposes.¹⁸⁹

Menedemus I long to hear the rest of the tale, so expect me as a guest for dinner. You'll tell it more comfortably there.

Ogygius Well, thanks very much for inviting yourself, since so many who are pressed to come decline. But my thanks will be doubled if you'll dine at home today, for my time will be taken up with greeting my family. Besides, I have a plan more convenient for us both. Have lunch at *your* home tomorrow

5 for me and my wife. Then I'll talk until dinner – until you admit you're satisfied; and if you like, we won't desert you even at dinner. What are you scratching your head for? You get it ready; we'll be sure to come.

Menedemus I'd prefer stories I wouldn't have to pay for. All right: I'll furnish a light lunch; only it will be tasteless unless you season it with good stories.

10 **Ogygius** But look here: don't you itch to go on these pilgrimages?

Menedemus Maybe I'll itch after you've finished talking. As matters stand now, I have enough to do by going on my Roman stations.¹⁹⁰

Ogygius Roman? You, who've never seen Rome?

Menedemus I'll tell you. Here's how I wander about at home. I go into the

15 living room and see that my daughters' chastity is safe. Coming out of there into my shop, I watch what my servants, male and female, are doing. Then to the kitchen, to see if any instruction is needed. From here to one place and another, observing what my children and my wife are doing, careful that everything be in order. These are my Roman stations.

20 **Ogygius** But St James¹⁹¹ will look after these affairs for you.

Menedemus Sacred Scripture directs me to take care of them myself.¹⁹² I've never read any commandment to hand them over to saints.

NOTES

- 1 Menedemus is 'stay-at-home.' The name Ogygius has the general sense of 'primeval.' Ogygius was the legendary founder of Thebes. Proverbially 'Ogygian misfortunes' were ones of great antiquity or enormous injury. See *Adagia* II ix 50.

When defending what Ogygius says in one passage (648:30–1, 37–9), Erasmus expressly identifies himself with him (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1161E). Ostensibly Ogygius is the reporter or narrator of what was seen or heard in Walsingham and Canterbury. Some of his remarks are such as Erasmus or any other visitor to those places would share, but others – interpretations or opinions – draw from Menedemus critical or ironical replies we recognize as Erasmian. As author, Erasmus plays both roles; he is Ogygius in description and travelogue, Menedemus in satire and irony.

- 2 ... *nisi prorsus hallucinor*; cf 'Beggars Talk' 564:3–4 and n2. The opening lines are reminiscent of those in Lucian's *Menippus*. In the present colloquy, where wonders and credulity count for so much, there may be other echoes of Lucian too, for example of *Alexander*, which Erasmus had translated. More translated *Menippus* and *Philopseudes* (see the introduction to 'The Liar and the Man of Honour' 344).

- 3 Repeated at 649:20 below and in 'Charon' 821:27. In Greek mythology Styx is the river in the underworld.
- 4 Shells were associated especially with St James and with Compostella and were traditional symbols of the pilgrim's progress. The 'tin and leaden images' were badges or brooches worn on hats and coats; on them see Dickinson 116–20 and plates 8 and 9. 'Snakes' eggs' are beads, that is, a rosary worn on the arm.
- 5 Jerusalem was the ultimate goal of most devout pilgrims. In England Canterbury and Walsingham were the shrines most frequented, but on the continent the shrine of St James the Great, apostle, at Compostella in Galicia, was second only to Rome in popularity. Erasmus, like others, often mentions it in the same breath with Jerusalem and Rome (as in *Enchiridion* LB v 63E–F / CWE 66 124; Allen Epp 875:14–17, 1202:215–8 / CWE Epp 875:16–20, 1202:246–50; and see 'Rash Vows'). William Wey's *Itineraries* (for the Roxburghe Club [London 1857]) records his pilgrimage to Compostella in 1456 and includes a list of indulgences obtainable there (159–61). For another account a decade later see Leo of Rozmital *Travels* 116–7. Andrew Boorde says (1548) that the pilgrimage to Compostella by land – English pilgrims often went by sea – was a hard journey and that he would rather go to Rome five times than once to Compostella (*The fyrst boke of the Introduction of knowledge* ed F.J. Furnivall EETS extra series 10 [London 1870] 202–6). He was sceptical of the relics seen there. On the legend of St James in Spain consult T.D. Kendrick *St James in Spain* (London 1960). On the pilgrimage consult Georgianna Goddard King *The Way of St James* (New York and London 1920; repr New York 1980); Vera and Hellmut Hell *The Great Pilgrimage of the Middle Ages: The Road to Compostella* (London 1966); *Les chemins de saint-Jacques* ed R. Oursel (Paris 1970); Horton and M.-H. Davies *Holy Days and Holidays* (London and Toronto 1982).
- 6 The shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, in the pilgrimage chapel of the priory of Walsingham in northern Norfolk, a few miles from the sea, dating from the twelfth century. By the fifteenth century the shrine had become a popular resort of Marian devotion in England. On its fame and the pilgrimage see Dickinson 3–47. Margery Kempe went there (*The Book of Margery Kempe* ed W. Butler-Bowdon [London 1936; Oxford 1954] 229–30; also ed S.B. Meech and H.E. Allen, EETS original series 212 [London and New York 1940; repr 1961]). Margaret Paston, writing to her ailing husband John, tells him that her mother promised to go (*Paston Letters* 28 September 1443; ed James Gairdner, 6 vols [London 1904] II 55 no 47); cf 'The Shipwreck' n27. Henry VI visited the shrine; Henry VII went at least three times. Henry VIII walked part of the way to Walsingham barefoot (the date is uncertain) and went again in 1511, after the queen was delivered of a boy, who died a few months later (Hall's *Chronicle* [1542; London 1809] 516–17). Queen Catherine of Aragon, who died in 1536, asked in her will that 'some personage go to our Lady of Walsingham in pilgrimage; and in going by the way to deal xx nobles' (Styrie *Ecclesiastical Memorials* [Oxford 1822] I part 2 252).
- 7 In Ep 262 written from Cambridge 9 May 1512 to Andrea Ammonio, Erasmus announces that he is going to visit the Virgin of Walsingham and will hang up a Greek poem to her. On this poem see 636:30–637:26 below. Presumably he made his visit soon afterwards. Nothing is known of a previous visit. He was

not in England between June 1506 and July 1509, and no letters written by him between the end of 1508 and April 1511 survive.

- 8 Since there is no telling what odd ideas devotees of Greek may have. The suggestion here may be either respectful or, more likely, ironic. See 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' n4.
- 9 Cf 'Rash Vows' 38:34–39:3.
Bishop Shaxton's injunctions for Salisbury diocese in 1538 warn midwives to avoid causing women, 'being in travail, to make any foolish vow to go in pilgrimage to this image or that image' after delivery (*Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation* ed W.H. Frere and W.M. Kennedy, 3 vols [London 1910] II 58–9).
- 10 Cf 'Military Affair' 58:15 and 'Alchemy' 550:19; the same image is used at 632:31, 633:17, 634:19 below.
- 11 *os oblinere*; cf *Adagia* I v 48.
- 12 See n163 below.
- 13 Cf Allen Ep 2285:94.
- 14 When defending certain passages in *Enchiridion* and 'The Shipwreck' on Mary and on saints, Erasmus conceded that some readers may have thought the letter which follows here was actually written by the Virgin (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* [1531] LB IX 1162B–1167A). But it is a joke (*lusus*), he says, directed at those who publicly condemn the veneration of saints and have removed or destroyed images that had been in churches. Germans familiar with Greek understand, he adds, that by 'Glaucoplutus' Zwingli is meant (see n23 below). 'Nor do I introduce the very Mother of Christ but an image styled "from the rock" [*a lapide*]. Nor does she write from heaven but from her stony house' (LB IX 1166A–B). This may seem a lame, even disingenuous, explanation when we read later that the letter was delivered by an angel and its opening words name the writer as 'Mary Mother of Jesus'; cf also n42 below. But Erasmus replies in a similar vein in that same year to the Paris faculty of theology (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 948E–F).
As a piece of factitious cleverness this letter belongs in a large company of similar compositions. One such was the translation of a 'letter,' printed by Foxe, from Lucifer, prince of darkness, to all 'persecuting Prelates,' exhorting them to subvert the gospel by promising appropriate rewards (*Acts and Monuments* III 190–2). A few inventions of this kind may be true literary art; for example the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* in Erasmus' time (and see 'The Exorcism' 540:34–541:9 and n39 above) and C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* in ours. In 1456 in Holland a confraternity of Our Lady generously provided a letter for a deceased member, recommending him to St Peter for admission through the heavenly gates (R.R. Post *Kerkgeschiedenis in de Middeleeuwen* 2 vols [Utrecht and Antwerp 1957] II 246n).
- 15 *apud Rauricos*; the Raurici were the tribe that anciently lived in the area. Their chief town was Augusta Raurica, the modern Augst. Maria a Lapide was the statue of the Virgin in the chapel at Mariastein, about seven miles south of Basel. The monastery, with a fine baroque church, is still a busy place of pilgrimage. Of the statues now placed above the two altars in the Gnadenkapelle, it is impossible to be certain which is the one to which Erasmus refers. The shrine is a chapel in the rock (hence the name), reached by descending a staircase. See Mauritius Fürst 'Erasmus und Mariastein' *Jahrbuch für Solothurnische*

Geschichte 47 (1974) 277–83; on the pilgrimage E.D. Baumann 'Die Wallfahrt von Mariastein' *Basler Jahrbuch* (1942) 110–39.

- 16 Then . . . But] Added in the March 1533 edition
- 17 Greek in the original
- 18 In the monastic church at Durham. According to legend, *venerabilis* was added to the epitaph by the hand of an angel when a monk could not think of a suitable word to insert in the verse he had composed (Thomas Fuller *Church History of Britain* [1655] 2.3.17; in the edition by James Nichols, 3 vols [London 1842] I 150).
- 19 St] *divo*. Added in the September 1531 edition. When St Giles interceded with God for the remission of the king's sins, an angel appeared and placed on the altar a scroll announcing forgiveness. The story is in the *Golden Legend* (1 September).
- 20 *Adagia* I iv 89
- 21 Touchstones, which tell whether supposed gold is genuine (Pliny *Naturalis historia* 33.126; Erasmus *Adagia* I v 87)
- 22 *Adagia* III ii 56
- 23 'Owl-rich' in Greek, 'Eul-reich' in German, and thus a play on the first name of Huldrych Zwingli, the Swiss reformer
- 24 Although Zwingli agreed with Luther on many matters, his own program for reforms increasingly involved more radical departures from traditional sacramental theology and practice. As early as 1523 he had begun to make clear his disagreement with Luther on the Eucharist. On this question their differences became irreconcilable. See G.W. Locher 'Zwingli und Erasmus' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 325–50; translation in *Erasmus in English* 10 (1979–80) 2–11.
- 25 Efforts in Zürich, incited by Zwingli's sermons and writings, to correct what he considered gross errors in received doctrine and worship came to a head in 1523–4. The course of controversy can be followed in three disputations, the first in January 1523, the second in October of that year, the third in January 1524. Zwingli declared that the Bible was the sole guide to doctrine and worship and that the mass as a sacrifice must be rejected; he denounced fasting, intercession of saints, and clerical celibacy. Images of saints were called idols, and Zwingli urged their removal from churches and their destruction. After the third disputation, and despite the opposition of the bishop, the Zürich town council ordered organs, relics, and images to be removed from the minster (June and July 1524). Thus began the iconoclasm that was to be repeated in other neighbourhoods and cities. The organs in the Zürich minster were finally destroyed in 1527 (see n161 below). For convenient texts and translations of Zwingli and reform in German Switzerland see Kidd *Documents* 374–476 and *The Reformation in Its Own Words* ed and trans Hans J. Hillerbrand (London 1964) 104–69. For a recent review of Zwingli's teachings see W.P. Stephens *The Theology of Huldreich Zwingli* (Oxford 1987). Many of his theological writings not previously available in English are translated in Edward J. Furcha and H. Wayne Pipkin *Huldrych Zwingli: Writings* 2 vols (Allison Park, Pa 1984). Zwingli relates that it was his reading, as a young man, of a poem by Erasmus, *Expostulatio Iesu cum homine*, which first convinced him that Christ is the only mediator between God and man (Kidd *Documents* 378–9 no 160; see CWE 85–6 84–9, 497–501 no 43 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 291–6 no 85). Erasmus addressed the preface of *Spongia* (1523) to Zwingli (Ep 1378), but cordiality on both sides

cooled as a consequence of Zwingli's teachings on the Eucharist – that it was not a sacrifice but only a commemoration of Christ's suffering – and his total hostility to images. Erasmus was later to witness the effects of Zwinglian ideas in Basel (see on this C. Augustijn 'Erasmus und die Reformation in der Schweiz' in *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 86 part 2 [1986] 27–42). Much as he himself deplored, and at times satirized, the superstitions connected with the use and abuse of images, he condemned the rash and violent actions of the iconoclasts. The difficulty about images, he wrote, was to treat them as reminders and symbols of truths without supposing, as the ignorant do, that these material objects and other things such as candles, pictures, and relics are efficacious in themselves or give access to God. True devotion to saints is the endeavour to emulate their virtues (see 'The Shipwreck' n38; 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n44). Erasmus' fellow pilgrim to Canterbury, John Colet, was once accused of preaching against images; see n146 below. See W.K. Jordan *Edward vi: The Young King* (Cambridge, Mass 1968) 182–5; John Phillips *The Reformation of Images: Destruction of Art in England, 1535–1660* (Berkeley 1973); and Eamon Duffy *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven and London 1992). The most comprehensive study of iconoclasm in England is Margaret Aston *England's Iconoclasts 1: Laws against Images* (Oxford 1988).

- 26 Cf *Moriae encomium* LB IV 445C–446A / ASD IV-3 124:990–126:22 / CWE 27 115. Lucian makes similar observations about the pagan gods (as in *Icaromenippus* 25), as Erasmus knew well.
- 27 'Many seek from saints what they would not dare to ask of a good man' (*Modus orandi Deum* LB V 1119D, where Erasmus goes on to recall some of his experiences on his Canterbury pilgrimage; see also *Ecclesiastes* LB V 873C–D).
- 28 See 'Military Affairs,' especially 55:9, 56:37–40 and 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 334:10–11.
- 29 One . . . Other people's] In the first edition the pronoun is masculine (*qui*); in the edition of March 1533 and other late ones consulted it is feminine (*quae*). With this reading the reference is to a bawd or prostitute. Similarly in line 18, *Aliorum* (masculine) is in the first edition; *Aliarum* (feminine) in the final authorized text of March 1533.
- 30 A comparable passage in a letter of March 1523 (Allen Ep 1347:77–93 / CWE Ep 1347:86–104), with petitions similar to those that follow here, is perhaps another indication that this colloquy was written near that time.
- 31 The status and popularity of Mary as mediatrix grew with the rise of Marian devotion and was very common in medieval religion. See Jaroslav Pelikan *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* 5 vols (Chicago 1971–89) III *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600–1300)* 160–74. Belief of the faithful in this Marian role was expressed in a variety of ways in early Christian literature, but the title of 'mediatrix' is first attested with certainty in the eastern church in the eighth century (see NCE IX 359a). In an *Obsecratio ad Virginem Matrem Mariam*, an unusually fervent and rhetorical supplication to the Virgin, written *in rebus adversis* and printed in his *Lucubrationculae* in 1503 or 1504, Erasmus addresses her as 'the only hope in our calamities' and says it is unthinkable that she will not take pity, since 'the Son you bore is easily moved, and so loving of you, so compliant, so reverent, that he denies nothing to the suppliant' (LB V 1233E, 1235E). With this, contrast the tone and occasion

of Allen Ep 2178:13–22 (1529) and *Epistola contra pseudevangelicos* (1529 or 1530) LB x 1583C / ASD IX-1 301:506–7, where Erasmus declares that as a reaction to Lutheran excesses Catholic theologians have now produced extravagant claims of their own in many matters, among them that Mary has certain powers to rule the Son. On Erasmus and the cult of Mary see L.-E. Halkin 'La Mariologie d'Erasmus' ARG 68 (1977) 32–54. Cf n75 below; 'The Shipwreck' n19; and the later colloquy 'The Sermon.'

- 32 For an example, see 'The Shipwreck' 355:28–31.
- 33 See 'The Shipwreck' n19 above.
- 34 On the wealth of the shrine at Walsingham see Dickinson 38–42, 59–61.
- 35 Since he had the keys (Matt 16:19; cf 'The Godly Feast' 177:3).
- 36 A common attribute of St Paul because, according to tradition, he was beheaded, or because he speaks of the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17) and of the word of God as a two-edged sword (Heb 4:12)
- 37 According to tradition Bartholomew, one of the twelve apostles, was martyred by being flayed alive. He is often portrayed holding a knife.
- 38 St William of Gellone, duke of Aquitaine (d c 812), who fought for Charlemagne against the Saracens. In 804 he founded a Benedictine monastery and afterwards became a monk. He was celebrated as the Carolingian model of warrior and monk.
- 39 Patron of soldiers. Like those of Barbara, Christopher, and some other popular saints, his name was removed from the liturgical calendar of the church in 1969, but he may still be venerated.
- 40 Fire and flames are associated with St Antony of Padua, but likewise with the Egyptian saint, signifying his fervour. It is sometimes said to be the bubonic plague, sometimes erysipelas or ergotism, against which his aid is sought (*Modus orandi Deum* LB v 1120C), or a symbol of the fire of hell, since St Antony suppressed the flames of sensuality that afflicted him. On Antony see also 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 475:6–9 and n43 and 'A Fish Diet' n328.
- 41 This date, 1 August 1524, is no certain clue to the date when the colloquy was written, but Allen has suggested that when Erasmus went from Basel on a visit to Burgundy in April of that year he may have journeyed via Mariastein (Ep 1440:4n). Whatever the date of composition, the date of the letter, 1 August 1524, is interesting in several respects. First, we have been told (624:13–14 above) that the letter has been in circulation for some time. Second, August 1524 was close to the date of iconoclastic activity in Zürich (June and July). Third, as Smith noted (*Key* 41), 1 August 1524 is the date of the letter (Ep 1476) dedicating the new edition (August–September 1524) of the *Colloquia* to Johann Erasmus Froben, son of the printer.
- 42 Virgin from the Rock] Editions before March 1533 have instead 'the blessed Virgin.' Cf n14 above.
- 43 Cf 'The Liar and the Man of Honour' 347:28–31.
- 44 The cathedral of Notre-Dame in Antwerp, admired particularly for its towering spire. See the frontispiece of Yale cwm 4, *Utopia*. More praises the building, and it was when he was coming from divine service there that he first met Raphael Hythlodai (ibidem 48, 49).
- 45 A slip. Walsingham is in northern Norfolk (in the north-east) and about six miles from the sea.

- 46 'Regular' clergy lived according to a rule; secular priests did not. The Augustinian canons regular, who are meant here, lived by St Augustine's rule in a semi-monastic community. Erasmus belonged to this order. Secular canons took no vows. They were usually attached to a cathedral or collegiate church. Not all monks were priests but they lived by a rule and were claustrated; hence regular canons might be said to be 'midway' between monks and secular canons. Cf 'The Old Men's Chat' n59, 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n97, and 'Exorcism' n9.
- 47 The same jest occurs in Erasmus' letter to 'Grunnius'; Allen Ep 447:502-4 / CWE Ep 447:552-4.
- 48 *apodixin mathematicam*. See Gellius 17.5.5.
- 49 A bull of excommunication. See 'Faith' n3 above.
- 50 An error; half of its annual income came from endowments. See Dickinson 54.
- 51 William Lowthe, a character Erasmus must have remembered if he met him, and may have heard of even if he did not meet him. In August 1514, a month after the episcopal visitation, Prior Lowthe was removed from the office he had held since 1504. He had been an unworthy and even scandalous ruler, as the visitation records make abundantly clear (*Visitations of the Diocese of Norwich* ed A. Jessopp, Camden Society new series 43 [London 1888] 113-23, 146-8). He was accused by the brethren of keeping a fool whom he admitted to communion, of striking a field worker so hard that the man died, of concubinage, of misappropriation of jewellery, and of defiant refusal to reform. If Erasmus knew of Prior Lowthe, his memories of Walsingham, and therefore the account in this colloquy, may have been coloured by the recollection.
- 52 The conventual church
- 53 The Holy House with its little (about twenty-three by twelve feet) inner chapel, where the statue of the Virgin stood. See lines 33-4 below and Dickinson 95-105. Evidently the statue was the 'original attraction' of Walsingham and the reason for its subsequent fame. Records concerning the priory, shrine, and the excavations (map in Dickinson opposite 106 and photographs in appendix) have settled some but not all questions about the buildings; many uncertainties remain. H.M. Gillett *Walsingham and Its Shrine* (London 1934) is a briefer account of these topics and less satisfactory than Dickinson's, which I follow.
- 54 On this see Dickinson 101-2. Erasmus' visit may have coincided with the time when new windows were being provided for the building.
- 55 Perhaps an allusion to 'Oceanumque patrem rerum' in Virgil *Georgics* 4.382
- 56 'That church' refers to 'her own church,' mentioned a few lines earlier. The 'small chapel' (*sacellum angustum*) is the inner chapel (within the Holy House), containing the statue of the Virgin. See Dickinson 95-106; on the wooden platform 98-9. The Holy House was supposedly a copy of the Santa Casa at Loreto near Ancona in Italy. That house, believed by the devout to be the home in Nazareth where Mary received the Annunciation, was moved miraculously to Illyria and again to Italy, according to a late medieval legend, and became a favourite resort of pilgrims; on the legend see C.U.J. Chevalier *Notre Dame de Lorette* (Paris 1906). A ballad printed c 1496 says that the chapel of Our Lady at Walsingham was first intended for the site, near the east end of the conventual church, where the chapel of St Laurence later stood (Dickinson 83, 91-2, 95), but the timbers were removed by angels to its known site, that is, the one familiar in Erasmus' time (Dickinson 55, 95; he reprints the ballad 124-30).

- In 1523 Erasmus had written a mass for Our Lady of Loreto at the request of a friend. It was so pleasing to the bishop of Besançon that he granted forty days' remission of penance to persons who used it. See *CWE* 85-6 361-3, 719-21 no 133 / *Reedijk Poems of Erasmus* 388-90 Appendix 1-6; Allen Ep 1391 introduction; Nati H. Krivatsy 'Erasmus and His Mass for the Virgin of Loreto' *Erasmus in English* 4 (1972) 2. For the entire liturgy see *LB* v 1327A-1336B. Erasmus does not refer there to the miraculous moving of the house.
- 57 Nothing is actually known of Andrew the apostle except what is written in the Gospels, but many legends about him exist. His supposed remains, once in Constantinople, were brought to Amalfi in the thirteenth century. Oil from the sepulchre of St Andrew is mentioned in the *Golden Legend* (30 November). St Catherine of Alexandria, martyr, was buried at Mt Sinai. On the oil at her tomb see the *Golden Legend* (25 November).
- 58 An allusion to the doctrine, long held but not defined authoritatively until 1950, of the Assumption of Mary: that upon completion of her earthly life, her soul and body were received into heaven
- 59 Ovid *Amores* 1.8.92
- 60 *mystagogi*, guides who conduct visitors through sacred places
- 61 In More's *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* the Messenger says he heard a preacher at St Paul's in London declare that 'our lady was a vyrgyn and yet at her pylgrymages be made many a foule metynge' (*Yale cwm* 6 part 1 100).
- 62 The Articles of Inquiry relating to Walsingham asked whether the keepers of the relics there put out tables for offerings as though a contribution was required or to shame visitors into giving (Nichols *Pilgrimages* 210 article 6). It is not impossible that this question, like others in the articles, was suggested by Erasmus' colloquy.
- 63 Some of the canons accused Prior Lowthe of misappropriating offerings and other conventual property (*Norwich Visitations* [n51 above] 114, 115, 117, 119).
- 64 Afterwards called the 'Knight's Door'; see Dickinson 57, 107. There is a drawing of the gateway and door in Nichols *Pilgrimages* facing page 84.
- 65 The Articles of Inquiry mention the knight (Nichols *Pilgrimages* 211 article 14), and the story is related 'from an old manuscript' in Francis Blomefield's *History of Norfolk* 5 vols (Fersfield and Norwich 1739-75) v 833-9; or see Nichols *Pilgrimages* 82-4. Erasmus is quoted on the adventure of the knight and on the sites of the Holy House and the statue (Blomefield v 838, 839).
- 66 *caprae*, feminine, but Pliny assures us that all goats have beards (*Naturalis historia* 8.203-4).
- 67 This was the chapel of St Laurence, to the east of the church and close to two wells that still exist (see Dickinson plates 2, 3b, 4b). The chapel of St Laurence is thought to have been on the original site of the chapel of Our Lady. On the wells see Dickinson 12, 83, 91-3; on the miraculous removal of the chapel of Our Lady, n56 above.
- 68 One of the charges against Nicholas White of Rye, a suspected heretic, in 1529, who was critical of pilgrimages, was that he spoke against the relic of St Peter's finger. He abjured (Foxe *Acts and Monuments* v 28).
- 69 Some sort of shed over the wells, apparently, but Erasmus' remark that it had been brought there suddenly from far away suggests confusion with the story about the miraculous removal of the Holy House to its new position.

70 The bearskin was also known to the Articles of Inquiry (Nichols *Pilgrimages* 211 article 14).

71 Portions of the heavenly milk, the blood of Christ, and the cross on which he suffered were among the most precious and famous of all the many relics in Christendom, in England as in other lands, and legends about them have common characteristics. Erasmus' scepticism about the authenticity of relics and his satire of abuses of them are plain to see, especially in this colloquy. Cf 'The Shipwreck' 355:30–1; 'Faith' 427:14–15; 'The Exorcism' 540:2–4. When criticized by opponents for some of the passages on relics, including those in 'A Pilgrimage,' he defends himself on both literary and ethical grounds. That he convinced his critics is unlikely. On the milk see Dickinson 57.

The relic of the Blood of Hailes in Gloucester was undoubtedly known to Erasmus, though there is no evidence that he ever saw it. St Thomas Aquinas held that all the particles of the sacred blood shed by Christ in the passion were reassumed by him at his resurrection, and that the blood kept in some churches as relics must have flowed from some image (*Summa theologiae* III q 54 art 3 [2 in some editions]). Veneration of the relic at Hailes was evidently unaffected by such views. In 1538, however, the king's commissioners who examined the relic reported that it was spurious and not blood at all. Accordingly the bishop of Rochester, John Hilsey (successor to Fisher), showed the 'blood' in a sermon at Paul's Cross in November 1538, affirming that it was a false relic (Nichols *Pilgrimages* 89).

The Blood of Hailes was said to have been brought to England from Germany.

72 The same remark occurs in Erasmus' note on Matt 23:5 (LB VI 118E). Cf 'The Shipwreck' 355:30–1 above and an interesting passage in Calvin's *Traicté des reliques*, which may owe something to Erasmus' lines. He says if all the supposed pieces of the cross that exist were collected, 'il y en auroit la charge d'un bon grand bateau' (Editions Bossard [Paris 1921] 113). Reading and Bury St Edmund's were two other of the many places in England claiming to own relics of the cross.

The officials who investigated the monasteries reported that at Walsingham 'was seen much superstition in feigned relics and miracles' (LP x no 364 page 143). This may be so, but we must remember that Cromwell's agents were not disinterested civil servants and not likely to underestimate anything their employer could use against the monasteries. The records of episcopal visitations may be more reliable evidence of the internal condition of English monasteries.

73 The Blessed Sacrament

74 The relic of the Virgin's milk had been at Walsingham since at least 1300 (Dickinson 39–40). Purporting to come from a grotto in Bethlehem, where Friar Felix Fabri (*Friar Felix at Large* 148) and William Wey (*Itineraries* 52), among others, claimed to have seen it, the relic was widely distributed. Arnold von Harff saw it in three churches in Rome (pages 21, 30, and 33 of his account; on these three travellers see 'Rash Vows' n3). It seems to have been a standard item in large collections; for example the famous one of Frederick the Wise in the castle church at Wittenberg (*Abläss und Reliquienverehrung an der Schlosskirche zu Wittenberg* ed P. Kalkoff [1907] 61). Ogygius' remark that the relic at Walsingham looked like powdered chalk is probably reliable. According

to the *Chronicle* of Charles Wriothesley (d 1562) a relic of the milk in St Paul's, London, was found to be 'but a peece of chalke' (ed W.D. Hamilton, Camden Society new series 11 [London 1875] 31. The Articles of Inquiry concerning Walsingham asked whether the relic was liquid or whether water was added to it when it began to dry up (Nichols *Pilgrimages* 212 articles 18–19).

Some writers think Erasmus has 'put the worst interpretation on the facts' (Dickinson 56). Perhaps he did sometimes, but he was not alone in doing so, and with regard to many relics he was invincibly sceptical – not without reason. What would Jerome say if he saw the milk of Mary displayed here and there for gain and honoured almost as much as the Blessed Sacrament (*Annotaciones in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 118E)? See also *De esu carniū* LB IX 1200C. Abuses and frauds were inevitable. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 had denounced deceptive relics (canon 62; Tanner I 263), but with little effect.

On his travels in western Europe in 1517–18, the Italian canonist Antonio de Beatis saw a vast number of relics in the numerous churches he visited. He cannot tell which relics are genuine and which are not, but he does not allow this fact to affect his belief in the articles of the faith. 'To believe is godly, and relics may be venerated, with due caution as to their authenticity.' Clergy have been remiss in investigating relics and permitting questionable ones to be displayed, he adds, but the abuse is so old that it must be tolerated, since there is so much vested interest – by cities, people, churches, sanctuaries – in them (*Travel Journal* 105, 121, 152, 153).

- 75 For other addresses to the Virgin in this colloquy see 634:11–16 and 636:30–1 and n96. Compositions by Erasmus, published elsewhere, in praise of the virgin are: 1/ *Paean divae Mariae* (CWE 85–6 276–99, 646–63 no 110 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 174–86 no 19 / LB VIII 572B–577E); 2/ *Paean Virgini Matri dicendus* written for his patroness Anne of Veere (LB V 1227E–1234C); 3/ an *Obsecratio ad Virginem Mariam in rebus adversis* (LB V 1233E–1240A); 4/ a mass for Our Lady of Loreto, with sermon added in the second edition (*Liturgia Virginis Matris* LB V 1327A–1330B; the sequence also in CWE 85–6 361–3, 719–21 no 133 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 388–90 Appendix 1-6); 5/ a prayer in *Precationes* (LB V 1200A–D); 6/ *Virginis et martyris comparatio*, written by request of nuns in Cologne (LB V 589A–600B; see Allen Ep 1346 introduction).
- 76 of dove-like simplicity] Added in the September 1531 edition in place of 'rational'
- 77 *tabellam*. In *Ecclesiastes* it means a collection plate or box in church (LB V 843C).
- 78 A Cambridge scholar who worked with Erasmus; later provost of Eton and bishop of Carlisle. He was a valued friend and correspondent. See Allen Ep 1656 introduction and CEBR.
- 79 As did the Articles of Inquiry: 'Item, what probacion or argument have they to shewe that the same are trewe reliques?' (Nichols *Pilgrimages* 210 article 5)
- 80 priest] *hierophanta*; in editions before September 1531 *mystagogus*
- 81 *illis minoribus*. A minor canon of a cathedral chapter was one who did not yet have a benefice (a share in the chapter's revenues), but Walsingham had no cathedral. None of the canons in the list printed by Dickinson 135–40 is termed 'minor.' The sixteenth-century texts of this passage that I have checked print *minoribus*, but two important seventeenth-century editions (Schrevelius 1693, first issued 1655, and Rabus 1693) capitalize the word: 'one of the

Minorites,' that is, Franciscans. There was a Franciscan friary on the outskirts of Walsingham, but the Augustinian canons of the priory church had charge of the shrine. It is inconceivable that they would have permitted a member of another order to serve there. Moreover Ogygius has said earlier that in the inner sanctum 'a canon stands by the altar' (630:13–14). Unless we evade the question and translate with Nichols (*Pilgrimages* 23) 'one of the inferior members of the convent,' we are left with either 'minor canons' or Minorites.' Clearly Erasmus means a canon.

- 82 *Iliad* 15.280; *Adagia* I viii 70
- 83 Cf 'The Epicurean' 1075:40–1076:2.
- 84 *Adagia* II i 54; see 'The Godly Feast' n22.
- 85 Erasmus had good eyesight and boasted in 1530 that he had never worn spectacles (Allen Ep 2275:25–8).
- 86 The source or sources of this account are unknown. Much of it may be Erasmus' invention, but it has some particulars found in other tales of saints or relics; for instance in traditions about how the Holy Blood came to Hailes.
- 87 King of Lydia, fabled for riches; *Adagia* I vi 74
- 88 Notre-Dame
- 89 This church of the patron saint of Paris was well known to Erasmus, who had lived nearby. In 1497 he wrote that he owed his recovery from a quartan fever to her intervention (Ep 50) and long afterwards wrote a poem of thanksgiving in her honour; it is also a eulogy of Paris. See CWE 85–6 168–77, 556–64 no 88 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 350–5 no 131). Ep 50 also describes briefly how the shrine of St Geneviève was carried in procession when the city invoked her aid during floods. See J.-C. Margolin 'Paris through a Gothic Window' in *Res publica litterarum: Studies in the Classical Tradition* (University of Kansas) 1 (1978) 207–8. On regular canons see n46 above.
- 90 See 'Rash Vows' n20.
- 91 *ex suo dimenso*, as in Terence *Phormio* 42
- 92 In Greek mythology the fifty daughters of Danaus who married the fifty sons of Aegyptus. All but one of the brides murdered their husbands on their wedding night. For this deed they were condemned to spend eternity in Hades filling a jar having holes in the bottom. See Aeschylus *Suppliants*.
- 93 Although the guilt of mortal sin and eternal punishment incurred thereby are remitted by divine grace when the sinner is truly repentant, he must still pay the temporal punishment for sin, in this life or in the place or state called purgatory, before being received into heaven. This doctrine, inferred from various biblical texts (the earliest are 1 Cor 3:11–15 and 2 Macc 12:39–45), was undefined and imprecise until Peter Lombard, then Thomas Aquinas and other scholastic theologians, refined it. A study by Jacques le Goff, *La Naissance du Purgatoire* (Paris 1981) trans A. Goldhammer *The Birth of Purgatory* (Chicago 1984) argues that the doctrine emerged not in the earlier years of the twelfth century, as is generally thought, but towards the end. However that may be, beliefs about purgatory became immensely influential on the religious attitudes and behaviour of Christians. Dante's *Purgatorio* remains the most imaginative expression of the punishments and promises of purgatory: promises, because however long and severe the necessary punishments there,

ultimate salvation is assured. Moving beyond Dante's vision, we meet the legalism and paradoxes and abuses of the penitential system, the scandals about indulgences and pardoners, and all the denunciations and defences of the system prominent in disputes during the Reformation era.

Temporal punishments due even for sins forgiven could be remitted to sincere penitents by partial (expressed in terms of time, so many days or years) or plenary (fully remitted, if God wills) indulgences. Many reformers before Luther had deplored scandalous abuses of indulgences; his protests in 1517 were merely the most dramatic. After a few years indulgences ceased to be a leading issue, but purgatory, because of its connection with indulgences and prayers for the dead, presented a difficulty for the more radical reformers. In England, for instance, Tyndale, Frith, and Latimer concluded that monasticism, indulgences, and purgatory were all corrupt and vain superstitions. More described purgatory with passionate and terrifying eloquence in his *Supplication of Souls* (1529); see for example Yale cwm 7 225. Erasmus satirized foolish confidence in indulgences when sincere repentance and amendment of life are urgently needed (see 'Rash Vows,' 'The Shipwreck,' and 'The Usefulness of the Colloquies' 1100:10–19).

The answer to Menedemus' question 'Are there days even in the underworld?' is yes, but the nature of the time granted by indulgences has never been defined. Theologians differed on the question. One explanation held that the days and years remitted by indulgences correspond to the length of time one would need to satisfy canonical penance. Scripture does not tell us about such matters. When it speaks of time and the Last Judgment, it accommodates the language to our capacities (*Explanatio symboli* LB v 1165E–F). In *Moriae encomium*, Folly scoffs at those who measure time in purgatory by centuries, years, months, days, hours as if from a mathematical table and without error (LB IV 444A / ASD IV-2 122:970–3 / CWE 27 114). That 'the grant is inexhaustible' is due to the church's 'treasury of merits,' the limitless store of the merits of Christ. The doctrine is stated in the bull *Unigenitus* of Clement VI (1343; text in Denzinger-Schönmetzner *Enchiridion symbolorum* 301 nos 1025–7).

When one is conscious that death is near, Erasmus advises, there is need of having appropriate texts of Scripture at hand, as Cornelius does in 'The Funeral' (776:30–2, 777:37–778:7, 779:2–6). With hope strengthened by these, purgatory will not terrify. Purchased pardons will not avail; prayers are more efficacious, and best of all is total submission to the divine mercy. These are the waters that cool the fires of purgatory (*De praeparatione ad mortem* LB v 1316E–1317A). Nowadays whoever doubts the pope's power over purgatory is burned for a heretic (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1057D). Erasmus implies doubt when he writes 'Would that [the pope] really could free souls from the punishments of purgatory!' (*Ratio verae theologiae* LB v 91A / Holborn 207:1–2; this remark was added in the 1522 edition). 'Would . . . could' (*Utinam . . . possit*) here conveys the same degree of dubiety as *Utinam . . . sit* in 'Faith,' where the reply to Aulus' 'What if God is in his vicar?' is 'I wish he may be' (422:10–11). The Council of Trent's decree concerning purgatory reaffirms the received doctrine but advises that the more difficult and subtle questions should be avoided in preaching to the uneducated (session 25 [1563]; Tanner II 774).

- 94 Bernard of Clairvaux (d 1153); see 'The Old Men's Chat' 67. See Murillo's painting *The Vision of St Bernard or St Bernard Supplicating the Virgin* (c 1660). In one of his visions he was thus rewarded for his writings and his devotion to Mary. The painting is no 19 page 93 in *Bartolomé Murillo 1617–1682*, the catalogue of a 1982 Murillo exhibition in London issued by Weidenfeld and Nicolson. In T.F. Crane's edition of *Liber de miraculis sanctae Dei genetricis Mariae* ('The Shipwreck' n19) is a legend of a monk who, when thought to be dying, was revived by the Virgin's milk (chapter 30 pages 36–8). See also *The 'Stella Maris' of John of Garland* ed Evelyn Fay Wilson (Cambridge, Mass 1946) 155–6 / PL 156 1044B–1047A.
- 95 Flowing with honey instead of milk
- 96 Erasmus' votive offering was a poem of fourteen lines, in Greek, addressed to the Virgin; it was first printed in the 1515 edition of his *Lucubrations*. See CWE 85–6 120–3, 520–1 no 51 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 303 no 92.
- 97 The subprior (because he is posterior to the prior); as at 637:10, 'protos-hysteros' is Greek in the original. For priors and subpriors of Walsingham see Dickinson 131–40.
Rabelais has a characteristic jest about 'prior' and 'posterior' in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* 1.44 that he may have owed to this passage.
- 98 'Abbot' is from Syriac, which is here identified loosely with Hebrew.
- 99 *Papa, abbas, caritatis cognomina sunt, non potestatis* "'Pope" and "abbot" are titles that express charity, not power' (*Enchiridion* LB v 49B / Holborn 107:15–16 / CWE 66 101).
- 100 Certain abbots were exempt from episcopal jurisdiction but had episcopal insignia, including staff and mitre, and some had as well jurisdiction comparable to that of bishops. Ogygius' remark implies either that the prior or provost of Walsingham does not have sufficient sanctity to deserve the title of abbot, or that the expense of obtaining the title and prerogatives of an abbey would be too great. In the late fourteenth century a controversy resulted from a Walsingham prior's attempt to become abbot (Dickinson 28–30). But Erasmus could hardly have known of that.
- 101 Greek in the original. A figure denoting things said in reverse order: 'the tail wags the dog,' 'the cart before the horse'; *Adagia* vi 30. If here synonymous with 'posterior prior,' it implies also that the subprior is a lackbrain or simpleton.
- 102 At the probable date of Erasmus' visit the subprior was Edmund Warham; *Norwich Visitations* (n51 above) 114. Nothing is known of him except that he, like other canons, complained about the prior, Lowthe, during the episcopal visitation of July 1514. On Lowthe see the same note.
- 103 See 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin' 250:13–14.
- 104 Abstention from sexual intercourse in the night before major feast days or receiving holy communion was recommended, but whether it was obligatory is uncertain. Cf CWE Ep 1301:129–34, citing St Gregory Ep 64 PL 77 1196, and for other patristic and medieval opinions see Gratian *Decretum* part 2 c 33 q 4 c 7 (Friedberg I 1248–9). The relic Menedemus is allowed to see is so sacred that he must be pure in every respect to be worthy of such a privilege.
- 105 River in Spain and Portugal, famous for its golden sands
- 106 At the entrance of the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris. See 'The Shipwreck' n29. For 'wagon-load or colossus' see *Adagia* III ii 5 and III ii 69.
- 107 The crapaudine, toadstone, or bufonite

- 108 See 'The Exorcism' 535:26–536:6 and n6.
- 109 On magnets see *Adagia* I vii 56, where Erasmus cites Pliny *Naturalis historia* 36.126–30; otherwise, unless noted, the examples in this paragraph are borrowed from 37.187–91. For Erasmus' estimates and uses of Pliny, especially in *Adagia* and *Parabolae*, see Allen Ep 1544, Erasmus' preface to a 1525 Froben edition of the *Naturalis historia*. On Pliny in the Renaissance consult George Sarton *The Appreciation of Ancient and Medieval Science during the Renaissance* (Philadelphia 1955) 78–85 and Charles G. Nauert Jr 'Humanists, Scientists, and Pliny' in *American Historical Review* 84 (1979) 72–85. Theophrastus *De lapidibus*, Isidore *Etymologiae*, and the medieval *Liber de gemmis* by Marbodius (pl 171 1737–70) were other standard sources of inherited lore on stones. Useful studies include Joan Evans *Magical Jewels of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Oxford 1972); Thorndike *Magic and Experimental Science* VI 298–324; Guy de Tervarent *Attributs et symboles dans l'art profane 1459–1600: dictionnaire d'un langage perdu* (Geneva 1958; supplement and index 1964). Since identification of some stones in Erasmus' catalogue is uncertain, their classical names are printed and italicized here. Names of less doubtful stones are translated.
- 110 Thunderstone (Pliny *Naturalis historia* 37.132, 134). It deterred storms and aided voyagers, according to a sixteenth-century handbook for travellers (Thorndike *Magic and Experimental Science* VI 614). S.H. Ball in *Scientific Monthly* 47 (1938) says it is not known what *ceraunia* was.
- 111 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 34.94. Said to be composed of copper and gold; of fiery colour. Cf CWE 85–6 108, 513 no 50:21 / Reediijk *Poems of Erasmus* 229 no 34:21.
- 112 On the colour of emeralds from Cyprus, see Pliny *Naturalis historia* 37.66. Cf *Adagia* III iv 30. Some writers thought emeralds, if swallowed, were protection against poison (Thorndike *Magic and Experimental Science* VI 311, 315).
- 113 On anthracites see also Pliny *Naturalis historia* 37.99 and *Parabolae* LB I 598E / CWE 23 222:34–9.
- 114 *aetites*, thought to be useful in childbirth (Pliny *Naturalis historia* 36.151); *Adagia* III vii 1 LB II 881D, and see 'Patterns' n66.
- 115 *chelidonia*. The odd statement that this stone has the image of an asp appears to be due to a textual confusion. Pliny, followed by Erasmus, says 'taos has the image of a peacock,' adding immediately (in words omitted by Erasmus) 'and a stone which I find bearing the name "timictonia" similarly resembles an asp in colour' (*Naturalis historia* Loeb Classical Library 10 vols [London and Cambridge, Mass 1949–62] x tr D.E. Eichholz [1962] 317). Possibly Erasmus when writing 'swallowstone' then added 'asp' from Pliny's remark in 37.187. Pliny mentions swallowstones (*chelidoniae*) in 37.155 but does not refer there to an asp. The *Castigationes Plinianae* of Ermolao Barbaro (Rome 1493), after quoting Pliny's *aspidi quam vocari timictoniam invenio* (sig s2 verso) then says: *Legendum forte chelidoniam ex Galeno, qui unum genus aspidis ita nominat* 'Perhaps we should read "swallowstone" with Galen, who names this as one kind of asp.' The 1525 Froben Pliny prints *chelidoniam*. Modern editions have *timictoniam*. The only occurrence of this word known to the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* ed P.G.W. Clare (Oxford 1982) is in Pliny 37.187. It is some kind of gem, but what kind is unexplained.
- 116 On the cantharid beetle see *Parabolae* LB I 580F and 586E / CWE 23 182:30–3, 196:21–3. Cf 'The Poetic Feast' n16.

- 117 The toad was a symbol of evil but helpless before the purity of the Virgin. In legend the toad identifies or intensifies the ugliness of sin. A story in Bishop Lucas of Tuy's *De altera vita* 3.15 (thirteenth century) tells how some heretics in Burgundy were being burned at the stake. Suddenly a monstrous toad appeared and jumped into the flames. 'One of the heretics, who was reported to be their bishop, had fallen on his back in the fire. The toad took his place on this man's face and in the sight of all ate out the heretic's tongue. By the next day his whole body, except his bones, had been turned into disgusting toads, which could not be counted for their great number . . . God omnipotent surely wished to show through the most unseemly and filthiest of animals, how foul and infamous are the teachings of heretics' (*Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History* III no 6 [Philadelphia 1897] 6–7; reprinted in *Readings in European History* ed James Harvey Robinson, 2 vols [Boston 1904] I 365). For another anecdote about a toad see the colloquy 'Sympathy' 1041:10–22.
- 118 See The Well-to-do Beggars' n44
- 119 *numero dixisti; Adagia* III vii 58. On the comment and response see *Adagia* II i 12.
- 120 One of the gold and silver statues was that of Henry VII. It was given in his lifetime. His will left instructions for a similar statue to be placed in the shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury (Dickinson 42; Nichols *Pilgrimages* 108–9).
- 121 A decade after this colloquy was printed, and a year or two before publication of the English translation (introduction 620 above), the English government, through a commission reporting to Cromwell, began visiting the smaller monasteries to examine their condition and management and made an inventory of their revenues, the *Valor ecclesiasticus*. As a consequence the monasteries and convents were closed and the monks pensioned off. In 1538–9 it was the turn of the larger monasteries and priories, including Walsingham and Christ Church Canterbury. For texts of the Acts of Parliament on dissolution of the smaller monasteries (1536) and of the larger ones (1539), see Gee and Hardy (introduction 620 above) 257–68, 281–302.
- The commissioners appointed by Cromwell, who was now vicar-general of ecclesiastical affairs, reported enough evidence of sloth, immorality, and corruption, and the *Valor ecclesiasticus* enough impressive evidence of the wealth of religious houses, to give the government excuse to seize the monastic properties, confiscate their wealth, and get rid of monasticism. The famous statue of the Virgin of Walsingham was taken to London and destroyed (1538). Of many accounts of these events the best introduction for the general reader is G.W.O. Woodward *The Dissolution of the Monasteries* (London 1966; New York 1967), but Knowles *ROE* III is the most comprehensive work on English religious houses of that era; part 3 (195–417) deals with the suppression. Philip Hughes *The Reformation in England* I (London 1950) and G. Baskerville *English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries* (London 1937) are readable narratives written from different points of view. On Walsingham alone see Dickinson 59–68. Woodward 59–67 prints selections from pertinent documents. For additional legal texts besides those in Gee and Hardy see J.R. Tanner *Tudor Constitutional Documents, A.D. 1485–1603, with an Historical Commentary* (Cambridge 1922); G.R. Elton *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary* (Cambridge

1960; 2nd ed Cambridge 1982); Hughes and Larkin *Tudor Royal Proclamations* (introduction 620 above). On the fate of the monks and friars and buildings see Woodward 139–50 and Knowles ROE III 383–417.

122 637:29–39 above

123 The common practice; cf *Romeo and Juliet* 1.2.56–8.

124 On hellebore see 'The Godly Feast' n63.

125 In ecclesiastical usage, an archbishop's see. Of many books on the history of Canterbury cathedral, two of the most useful older ones are A.P. Stanley *Historical Memorials of Canterbury* (London 1854; 11th ed 1912); and C. Eveleigh Woodruff and William Danks *Memorials of the Cathedral and Priory of Christ in Canterbury* (London 1912). For the architectural history of the cathedral see Robert Willis *The Architectural History of Canterbury Cathedral* (London 1845) and a recent work with the same title by Francis Woodman (London 1981).

126 Augustine of Canterbury, who arrived in England in 597 and founded this monastery a year or so later. It was dedicated to Sts Peter and Paul and nearly four centuries later rededicated to Peter and Paul and Augustine.

127 The second monastery was the priory of Christ Church, but Erasmus' statement that the church (cathedral, that is) was dedicated to St Thomas is ambiguous. It was dedicated to Christ. Its intimate association with St Thomas Becket led Erasmus into error here, unless he was thinking of the Trinity chapel (see n156 below) alone and not of the cathedral.

128 The archbishop's lodgings were near the west end of the cathedral. In later centuries the principal residence of archbishops of Canterbury was, and is, Lambeth Palace, London.

129 See 645:15 below.

130 There are three towers, two at the west end and the great central tower, the 'Bell Harry' tower as it was called, built between 1495 and 1503.

131 Erasmus' (or the compositor's) rather fanciful names for William de Tracy, Richard le Breton, and Reginald Fitzurse. The fourth knight, Hugh de Morville, he does not seem to have known of, for in his brief account in *Lingua* of Becket's murder (LB IV 709C / ASD IV-1A 111:795–803 / CWE 29 343) he refers to three murderers, just as here he speaks of three statues.

132 Many legends about the assassins were current; for example, that wherever they went they had wind and weather against them. The *Golden Legend* (29 December) describes some of their torments; and see Nichols *Pilgrimages* 113.

133 At the west end

134 Five editions of a translation into English of the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus* or *Acta Pilati* were printed between 1507 and 1518 (see stc), but the chained copy seen by Erasmus may have been a bound codex rather than a printed book.

135 Gates and grille excluded lay people from the upper part of the choir (Woodruff and Danks [n125 above] 274).

136 Ogygius is being led to the scene of the martyrdom in the north-west transept.

137 Known as the 'altar of the sword point.' See next note.

138 The sensational murder of Becket in Canterbury cathedral, in the semi-darkness of late afternoon on 29 December 1170, was one of the most fully recorded events of medieval history. At least four of the early accounts come from eyewitnesses. On these and other important sources see David Knowles

'Archbishop Thomas Becket: A Character Study' *Proceedings of the British Academy* 35 (1949) 177–205, reprinted in his *The Historian and Character* (Cambridge 1963) 98–128. For a longer study of Becket's life and death at Canterbury see Stanley *Memorials* (n125 above). The most valuable biography is Frank Barlow *Thomas Becket* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1986). Basic documents for Becket's career are collected in J.C. Robertson and J.B. Sheppard *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket* Public Record Office: Rolls Series 67, 7 vols (London 1875–85). Erasmus may have seen one or more of the narratives, for example John of Salisbury's. In *Lingua* he quotes or paraphrases Henry II's wrathful outburst against the archbishop for daring to excommunicate some of his supporters, including two bishops (LB V 709C / ASD IV-1A 111:795–801 / CWE 29 343). This fit of rage prompted the four courtiers to hasten to Canterbury and confront Becket. Erasmus might easily have heard other stories about Becket's history from the reigning archbishop (his friend and patron Warham), Colet, and More. Some things he recalls and relates in the colloquy seem to derive from the kind of patter common to guides.

The spot (now known as the Martyrdom) in the north-west transept where Becket was killed is close to the Lady Chapel and to the stairway leading to the aisle of the north choir, where the monks were singing Vespers. The archbishop started to ascend the stairs but turned back when he heard or saw his pursuers. The altar to which Erasmus refers was not there in Becket's time, but the point of the sword that broke off after a tremendous stroke by one of the assailants, le Breton, which severed the crown of the archbishop's head, was found by the monks and preserved as a relic, enshrined in another altar placed in this area. This 'altar of the sword point,' as it was called, disappeared after the suppression of monasteries in 1538. That Becket's brain was 'smashed . . . to make death come more quickly' is not Erasmus' invention but is in one of the early reports.

- 139 Some hours after the murder, during the night, the monks put the archbishop's corpse on a bier, which they then placed before the high altar. Within the next day or two they dressed the body in full archiepiscopal vestments and laid it in a marble sarcophagus (intended for some other burial), which they buried in the crypt of the Trinity chapel, at the east end of the cathedral.
- 140 The identification is doubtful. 'More probably the new relic of St Dunstan, which had recently been enclosed in a mitred bust of silver, since there is no other record of any part of St Thomas' head being kept in the crypt' (Woodruff and Danks [n125 above] 275; and see *Inventories of Christ Church Canterbury* ed J.W. Wickham Legg and W.H. St John Hope [Westminster 1902] 41, 123n). When St Dunstan's tomb was opened in 1508 the prior had a reliquary made, in the shape of a human head, for that saint's skull (Woodruff and Danks 213). The *Chronicle* of Charles Wriothesley (n74 above), recording the destruction of the shrine, removal of the treasures, and burning of the bones of St Thomas in September 1538, adds: 'They found his head hole with the bones, which had a wounde in the skull, for the monkes had closed another skull in silver richly, for people to offer to, which they sayd was St. Thomas skull, so that nowe the abuse was openly knowne that they had used many yerres afore' (86–7). Stow says it was in the shrine (see n168 below). John Gerard, the Elizabethan Jesuit, writes c 1594: 'About the same time, also, I was given a silver head of

St. Thomas of Canterbury, and his mitre studded with precious stones. The head is small and of no great value in itself, but it is quite a treasure because it contains a piece of the saint's skull. It is about the breadth of two gold crowns and it is thought to be the piece that was chipped off when he was so wickedly slain' (*John Gerard: The Autobiography of an Elizabethan* trans Philip Caraman [London 1951] 50).

- 141 Acre (Akka) is a town on the coast of Palestine. According to a medieval story, long circulated, Becket's mother was a Saracen.
- 142 It was seen by Leo of Rozmital in 1466 (*Travels* 44). Whether the relics shown to Erasmus three and a half centuries later were authentic is of course impossible to say. What is certain is that very soon after the murder, while Becket's body was lying where he fell, people from the neighbourhood were collecting his blood and pieces of his bloody clothing. The monks discovered, with surprise, that he wore many layers of clothing. His hair shirt and drawers were covered with lice and vermin. Long before Thomas Becket was officially canonized in 1173, relics of his blood were credited with miraculous power. On the cult of St Thomas, which became celebrated throughout Christendom, see Barlow *Becket* (n138 above) 264–72.
- 143 To the great treasury near the high altar. As one would expect, Canterbury possessed an amazing number of relics. They are listed in Wickham Legg and St John Hope *Inventories of Christ Church Canterbury* (n140 above) 41–97 and passim. Among them were Aaron's rod, a portion of the table used at the Last Supper, many pieces of the true cross, a piece of the stone on which Christ stood as he ascended to heaven, and some of the clay from which God made Adam.
- 144 Including part of an arm of St Jerome, which unfortunately Erasmus failed to see
- 145 That Pullus ('colt') is Colet cannot be doubted. See Allen Ep 1211:327n. In that letter Erasmus says he and Colet went on pilgrimage together, and in *Modus orandi Deum* (1524) that Colet was with him at Canterbury when they were invited to venerate some mean relics of St Thomas (LB V 1119F–1120A; see 647:8–21, 648:15–31 below). In an earlier colloquy, 'The Exorcism,' Erasmus puns on *pullus* when he apparently intends John Colt, More's father-in-law. With that identification there are some difficulties (see the introduction 531–2), but not with the one here.
- 146 'Gratian did not shrink from the teachings of Wyclif' Erasmus asserts when defending what he wrote in the present colloquy about relics (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1161D). Colet was not a follower of Wyclif or a Lollard, yet some of his convictions about the evils of pilgrimages and other ecclesiastical abuses, including clerical cupidity, were similar to Wyclif's. It is not surprising that some reputed heretics and Lollards thought well of Colet. See A.G. Dickens *The English Reformation* (London 1964) 26–8. Colet read heretical books, according to Erasmus, thinking he might learn something even from them (Allen Ep 1211:516–7 / CWE Ep 1211:561–2). He was once charged with heresy by the bishop of London, Fitzjames, but the charges were dismissed by intervention of Archbishop Warham. One of the accusations was that Colet had spoken against adoration of images (Allen Ep 1211:472–80, 538–44 / CWE Ep 1211:513–22, 585–91).

In the theological controversies of Erasmus' age the names of Wyclif and Hus were commonly associated, not without reason. Hus was regarded as a progenitor of Lutheran heresy. The flat statement of Ogygius (the voice of Erasmus in this passage) in 1526 that Colet had read Wyclif would have implied to some readers who detested Hus and Luther that Colet was not beyond suspicion of unorthodoxy. Whether Erasmus intended any such implication is quite a different question, but his 'I don't think so' is significantly ambiguous.

Of Erasmus' own opinions of Wyclif's teachings we can only surmise that on such subjects as relics, clerical corruption, and pilgrimages he concurred, but he did not have to read Wyclif to learn about such matters. He declared in 1524 that he had never read either Wycliffite or Hussite books (*Apologiae contra Stunicam* LB IX 383D), but he often couples Wyclif with Hus as heretics. Writing to Adrian VI in 1523 on methods of suppressing Lutherans, he warns that the use of force did not succeed in extinguishing the Wycliffites in England (Allen Ep 1352:153–6 / cwe Ep 1352:173–77; similarly Allen Epp 1721:66–80, from 1526, and 2136:154–72, from 1529). He was well aware of the abhorrence of Wyclif and Wycliffites felt by More, Tunstall, and other English friends. Tunstall denounces Wycliffites (Lollards) vigorously in a letter of June 1523 (Allen Ep 1367:62–84 / cwe Ep 1367:70–93). In his reply Erasmus comments on Lutherans and Anabaptists but does not mention Wyclif or Wycliffites (Ep 1369).

On later Lollardy and English nonconformity see also Anne Hudson *The Premature Reformation* (Oxford 1988); Margaret Aston *Lollards and Reformers* (London 1985).

- 147 The high altar
- 148 In the vaulted chamber under the steps leading to the archbishop's throne
- 149 On Midas see *Adagia* I vi 24; on Croesus, I vi 74 (as at n87 above).
- 150 'Now shall the sight of such riches as are shewed at St Thomas's shrine, or at Walsingham, move a man to love the commandments of God better, and to desire to be loosed from his flesh and to be with God; or shall it not rather make his poor heart sigh, because he hath no such at home, and to wish part of it in another place?' (Tyndale *Prologue to the Book of Numbers* [1530] in Works I [Ps 42] 436).
- 151 Or vestry; perhaps the inner vestry where more treasures were kept (Woodruff and Danks [n125 above] 277)
- 152 *pedum*, the ceremonial staff or crosier carried by archbishops and bishops; usually surmounted by a cross. A fifteenth-century painting of Becket (Herbert Norris *Church Vestments* [New York 1950] plate 16) shows him holding a crosier. If his was only waist-high it was unusually short and must have 'looked like a cane,' perhaps because only the top section survived.
- 153 Circular band of white wool worn on the shoulders by archbishops. It is conferred on them by the pope. On St Thomas' see *Inventories of Christ Church Canterbury* (n140 above) 42n.
- 154 Or napkin. In context, this was undoubtedly the archbishop's amice, worn around the neck under the liturgical garments to protect them from sweat and the wearer from chafing. It is not mentioned in the inventories. A relic of the

- saint's blood was said to be still at Canterbury, but Archbishop Cranmer wrote to Cromwell in August 1538 that he believed this blood 'is but a feigned thing and made of some red ochre or of such like matter' (letter 237 in *The Works of Thomas Cranmer* ed J.E. Cox, PS 15–16, 2 vols [Cambridge 1844–6] II 378); also LP XIII part 2 no 126 page 45.
- 155 Archbishop of Canterbury 1504–32 and lord chancellor 1504–15. See Holbein's portrait of him (reproduced in CEBR III 428; drawing in CWE 4 74). One of Erasmus' earliest English patrons, Warham granted him pensions from two livings (Allen Ep 2159:26n). Erasmus' edition of Jerome (1516) was dedicated to him; see Ep 396. Erasmus praises him in the highest terms for his pure Christian character and modesty, and his encouragement of learning (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 903E–905D). *Ecclesiastes* LB V 810E–812B and Allen Ep 2758:38–83 have interesting remarks on Warham's mode of life. Erasmus respected him as he respected very few other prelates.
- 156 In the chapel of the Holy Trinity, at the east end of the cathedral, the pilgrims see the 'entire countenance' (*tota facies*) of the saint. This, according to the usual explanation, was the mitred bust of St Thomas, enclosing what was called *corona* – 'Becket's crown' or (from its shape) his head (*Inventories of Christ Church Canterbury* [n140 above] 42–3, Woodruff and Danks [n125 above] 279). Nichols however (*Pilgrimages* 180) thinks what is meant is the whole figure or image rather than the head only. The term *corona* itself is confusing, because it was both an area (the Trinity chapel) and the relic kept there ('Becket's crown' or, as is sometimes intended, that part of his skull severed by the fatal blow). See Stanley *Memorials* (n125 above) 220–1.
- 157 The pun on 'Gratianus' may be additional evidence, if any is needed, that Gratian is Colet, for (as Lupton noted in his *Life of Colet* 210) Jerome interprets the name Ioannes as meaning one 'cui est gratia vel Domini gratia' (*Liber de nominibus Hebraicis* PL 23 [1883] 886).
- 158 See a comparable passage in 'The Godly Feast' 198:32–199:36, which makes specific reference to St Thomas' tomb.
- 159 Wrathfully; *Adagia* III iv 13
- 160 The Paris theologians carped at these questions. Erasmus retorted that these ornaments did nothing to reduce the sufferings of the poor; and anyway such wealth would be plundered sooner or later (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 948F–949B and *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1157A–C).
- 161 The nature and place of music in churches in the time of Erasmus has not been neglected. This note is limited to Erasmus' criticism in these and comparable passages. Whether music is the gift of God and drives the devil away, as Luther thought (WA *Tischreden* 1 no 968, 4 no 4441, 6 no 7034), or whether, on the other hand, organs should be banned altogether, as they were by the Zwinglians (see Charles Garside Jr *Zwingli and the Arts* [New Haven and London 1966] 60–2), were attitudes obviously incompatible though perhaps not totally irreconcilable. In such matters Erasmus, in some moods at any rate, was nearer to the Calvinist and Zwinglian positions than to Luther's. Erasmus knew music and thought about it seriously. He is said to have been a choirboy at Utrecht under the renowned composer Jacob Obrecht; whether he

was can be questioned, apparently (Allen I 56:9n). He praises the divine music of the Psalms (*Enarratio in psalmum xxxviii* LB V 418A–428D). But congregational singing by men and women vexes him. How do the dissenting sects reconcile it with their professed adherence to apostolic teaching? For did not Paul say that women must keep silence in churches (*Epistola ad fratres Inferioris Germaniae* LB X 1595D)? Erasmus comments on chants and organs in his note on 1 Cor 14:18–19 (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 731C–732C; cf Allen Ep 1573:4–11 / CWE Ep 1573:6–13). There is entirely too much singing, yet one can hear an edifying sermon scarcely once in six months. Choirs are too preoccupied with the music to pay much attention to the meaning of the words they sing, yet preaching is far more important and more profitable than this neighing and yelping (*hinnitus* and *gannitus*), as he unkindly terms it. Paul sensibly preferred to preach, not sing. Today, instead, congregations hear voices signifying nothing. What do people think of Christ who believe he is pleased by a din of this kind? Elaborate, theatrical music makes divine service noisier than Greek or Roman theatres. Organists (or organ-makers, *organorum opifices*, but they were often the same persons) are employed at high cost. Music is unobjectionable if kept within bounds, but in fact it is overemphasized, takes up too much time in divine service, and is seriously disturbing (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 942A–B). ‘Which is more holy, to work with your hands to keep your children from starving or to spend the whole day listening to singing that is unintelligible and therefore useless?’ (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1155D).

On Erasmus and music consult C.A. Miller ‘Erasmus on Music’ *Musical Quarterly* 52 (1966) 332–49 and J.-C. Margolin’s monograph *Erasme et la musique* (Paris 1965). A more recent contribution is that of Helmut Fleinghaus, *Die Musikanschauung des Erasmus von Rotterdam* Kölner Beiträge zur Musikforschung 135 (Regensburg 1984). On Luther, R.H. Bainton’s *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York 1950) 140–7 summarizes the subject. For Calvin see H.P. Clive ‘The Calvinist Attitude to Music, and Its Literary Aspects and Sources’ *BHR* 19 (1957) 80–102; 20 (1958) 79–107; and Charles Garside Jr ‘The Origins of Calvin’s Theology of Music: 1536–1543’ *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 69 no 4 (1979); for Zwingli, Garside *Zwingli and the Arts* (cited earlier in this note).

162 As, he assumes, Zwinglian churches were

163 He alludes to Ambrose and Paulinus of Nola. It was told of Ambrose that when he was chosen bishop of Milan he gave his wealth to the church and to the poor. After the defeat of the Roman army by Visigoths at Adrianople in 378, he ordered the vessels of his church to be melted and used to ransom the Christian captives. Paulinus (d 431) likewise, after conversion to Christianity, gave his fortune to the church and the poor. St Laurence (martyred 258) was not a bishop, but as one of the seven deacons of Rome was in charge of the church’s treasures. When Pope Sixtus II was condemned to death during a persecution in Rome he instructed Laurence to distribute the wealth of the church to the needy. Laurence did so, and when commanded by the persecutors to produce the wealth pointed to the crowd of poor and sick: these, he said, were the treasures of the church. St Ambrose defends his own actions and St Laurence’s in *De officiis ministrorum* 2.28 PL 16 139C–142A, a chapter Erasmus certainly had

in mind in this paragraph. From time to time he returns to this theme of using the wealth of the church to relieve human suffering instead of spending it on building. See n158 above. Earlier, in his letter to abbot Volz introducing the new edition of *Enchiridion*, he argues that it is better to relieve the poor than to spend or give money for building or for pilgrimages (Allen Ep 858:400–14 / CWE Ep 858:424–38). The language he uses may be compared with that of theses 43–6 of Luther's *Ninety-five Theses* (Clemen VI or Kidd *Documents* 23–4 no 11). More rejects such arguments in his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* against Tyndale (Yale CWM 6 part 1 50:21–51:19).

- 164 The same phrase, *expecto catastrophem*, is in *Julius exclusus* (Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 99:631). On *catastrophe*, see *Adagia* 1 ii 26.
- 165 If a Benedictine monastery had an abbot, his authority was supreme and the prior was second in dignity. In some houses where the title of abbot was not used, the head of the monastery was styled prior. At the time of Erasmus' visit to Canterbury the prior was Thomas Goldstone II, who held office from 1495 until 1517. He was responsible for the building of Christ Church gate and completion of the central tower.
- 166 *Ex officio*
- 167 Not intended as a compliment. Erasmus' comment on Fitzjames, the bishop of London who charged Colet with heresy in 1512, is typical of his dislike of Scotists: 'superstitious and invincible Scotist, and for that reason seemed half-divine to himself' (Allen Ep 1211:530–4 / CWE Ep 1211:576–80). On the Scotists and Erasmus' prejudices see above 'The Godly Feast' 192:19–26 and n190. Colet shared these opinions (Allen Ep 1211:425–7 / CWE Ep 1211:462–4).
- 168 This was the shrine of St Thomas, described succinctly by Erasmus as a chest within a chest; it was in the Trinity Chapel, behind the high altar. The lower part of the shrine was stone; above this was a wooden canopy, covered with plates of gold. When the canopy was drawn up by ropes the shrine was disclosed. See the detailed description in Stanley *Memorials* (n125 above) 181–251. Nichols *Pilgrimages* 188 quotes the description in Stow's *Annals*: 'This Shrine was builded about a man's height all of stone; then upward of timber, plaine; within the which was a chest of yron, conteyning the bones of Thomas Becket, scull and all, with the wounde of his death, and the peece cut out of his scull layde in the same wounde.' On the skull see n156 above. On the treasure, Stow writes: 'The spoile of which shrine, in golde and precious stones, filled two great chests, such as sixe or seaven strong men could doe no more then convey one of them at once out of the church' (*ibidem* 189). An account written in the earlier part of the sixteenth century says: '[The tomb] . . . is entirely covered over with plates of pure gold; but the gold is scarcely visible from the variety of precious stones with which it is studded, such as sapphires, diamonds, rubies, balas-rubies, and emeralds; and on every side that the eye turns, something more beautiful than the other appears' (*A Relation of England* 30). Pope Pius II (d 1464), who had seen the treasures, remarked that to offer any gift less precious than silver was considered sacrilegious (*Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: The Commentaries of Pius II* trans Florence A. Gragg, ed Leona C. Gabel [New York 1959; repr 1962] 32).
- 169 Most famous was the 'Regale of France,' supposedly the gift of Louis VII of France. What kind of jewel this was is uncertain. The *Relation of England*

- speaks of it as 'a ruby, not larger than a man's thumb-nail,' but surpassing all other gems there in beauty (30). Leo of Rozmital describes one stone seen at Canterbury as 'a carbuncle which shines at night and which is half the size of a hen's egg' but does not say this was the Regale of France (*Travels* 43-4, 50-1). After confiscation of Canterbury's treasures, Henry VIII is said to have had the Regale set in a ring which he wore on his thumb. On the Regale see Stanley *Memorials* (n125 above) 223-4, 291. In Holbein's portraits of the king he wears rings on his index fingers, as he does in a drawing by Metsys made a few years before Henry's death. Louis VII, accompanied by Henry II of England, went on pilgrimage to Canterbury in 1179. The story that the Regale was a gift from Louis seems traceable to the Icelandic saga about Becket, *Thomas Saga Erkibyskups*. See Amy Kelly Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings (New York 1957) 254.
- 170 Erasmus mentions these and other mean relics in writing to Warham a few years after his visit (Allen Ep 396:64-9 / CWE Ep 396:73-9) and later in *Modus orandi Deum* (1524) LB V 1119F-1120A.
- 171 Colet was amiable enough towards his friends, and Erasmus says elsewhere that he was *festivus* on this pilgrimage (Allen Ep 1211:327-8), but he was fastidious by temperament, *impatiens omnium sordium* 'impatient of everything slovenly' (Allen Ep 1211:329 / CWE Ep 1211:361), and did not suffer fools gladly. See an anecdote in Allen Ep 1347:31-58 / CWE Ep 1347:36-65.
- 172 *Adagia* II iv 46
- 173 With the story that follows compare Erasmus' own disaster when he was about to cross the channel in 1500. Customs officers seized eighteen of his twenty pounds. Although the seizure was legal, he never forgot or forgave it. See 'Patterns' n69. For complaint about another hazard in crossing, stolen luggage, see Allen Ep 295:4-18 / CWE Ep 295:6-21. The channel crossing, he warned a servant-pupil whom he was sending to England, was irksome and costly, but brief and therefore not notorious for shipwrecks (Allen Ep 1832:46-52). There might be other kinds of trouble, however, as his own experience had taught him.
- 174 *dimidium drachmae* is Erasmus' term. 'Sixpence' may seem a trifle, but in Erasmus' time it could have been a day's wages.
- 175 Virgil *Eclogues* 3.16
- 176 Virgil *Aeneid* 6.126-9
- 177 *Adagia* I vii 11
- 178 *Adagia* IV vii 92. 'I hate that horrible channel and those still more horrible sailors' (Allen Ep 756:34-5 / CWE Ep 756:35-6).
- 179 Herboldown hospital as it was later called, at Harbledown ('Bobbe-up-and-down' in *Manciple's Prologue* 2 in the *Canterbury Tales*), about two miles from Canterbury. This structure still existed in the middle of the nineteenth century (Nichols *Pilgrimages* 199-201).
- 180 According to Stanley *Memorials* (n125 above), one of the surviving relics from the medieval almshouse was 'an ancient maple bowl, bound with a brazen rim, which contains a piece of rock crystal, so exactly reminding us of that which Erasmus describes in the leather of St. Thomas's shoe, as to suggest the conjecture that when the shoe was lost, the crystal was thus preserved' (236). This so-called relic seems to have made a lasting impression

on Erasmus, who refers to it contemptuously in other writings: *Modus orandi Deum* LB V 1119F–1120A; *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 118E; Allen Ep 396:64–6 / CWE Ep 396:73–6; *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1161B–1162B. In this last passage he reminds the reader that Gratian (Colet) 'did not shrink from the teachings of Wyclif' (see n146 above), but even so, he adds, Gratian's indignant reaction is sensible and justified.

- 181 Another relic surviving from the almshouse was 'a rude box, with a chain to be held by the hand, and a slit for money in the lid, at least as old as the sixteenth century. In that box we can hardly doubt, the coin of Erasmus was deposited' (Stanley *Memorials* [n125 above] 236).
- 182 Erasmus made a similar reply to the Paris theologians who had criticized these lines on relics (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 949C–D). If one kissed ... pardonable.] This sentence was added in the March 1533 edition.
- 183 As in 'The Funeral' 772:27–773:26
- 184 The *Valor ecclesiasticus* and evidence collected in *Inventories of Christ Church Canterbury* (n140 above) confirm the wealth. A dozen years after this colloquy was printed all the wealth of Canterbury was confiscated by the government and Christ Church priory was dissolved.
- 185 The same assertion about what Becket achieved by his martyrdom is made in Erasmus' dedicatory letter to his Paraphrase on Mark, addressed to Francis I (Allen Ep 1400:243–64, particularly 261–3 / CWE Ep 1400:255–75, particularly 272–3). The entire passage was omitted in the English translation of the Paraphrases (1548; STC 2854). Archbishop Warham's agent in Rome reported in 1520 that he had told the pope 'theyr ways never a man that dyde schow more for [did more to advance] the lyberteys off the Churche than Syntt Thomas off Cantorbery' (*Christ Church Letters* ed J.B. Sheppard, Camden Society new series 19 [London 1877] 72).
Erasmus tells us nothing about St Thomas' miracles. In February 1173, less than three years after his murder, Thomas was canonized. Almost from the day of his death he was credited with miracles, and his shrine very quickly became one of the principal resorts of Christian pilgrims. The 'Miracles of Thomas Becket' comprise the largest collection of miracle stories connected with any medieval shrine. See R.W. Southern *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven and London 1965) 254–5.
- 186 On an island in Lough Derg in county Donegal in the north-west corner of Ireland. It became a place of pilgrimage because St Patrick was said to have had a vision promising the devout who went to this cave a sight of the torments of sinners and joys of the redeemed in the next world. On the legend see Shane Leslie *Saint Patrick's Purgatory* (London 1932). *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1312C alludes to the cave.
- 187 On Stygian waters see n3 above; on Avernus, Virgil *Aeneid* 6.126–9 as at 648:6–7 above. In *Adagia* I vii 77 Erasmus compares St Patrick's cave with the cave of Trophonius, on which see 'The Funeral' n2.
- 188 See 'Inns.'
- 189 Cf 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 471:5–13.
- 190 Processions to certain churches in Rome during Lent and at other special times. Indulgences were granted to participants.

191 Of Compostella

192 No single passage is meant but the precepts of both Old and New Testaments on responsibility for the proper care of wife and children. Allusion to Roman stations a moment earlier shows that Erasmus is thinking here, as in so many texts, of one's duty to stay at home and provide for one's family instead of roaming about the world on pilgrimages. Cf 'Rash Vows' n14 and 'The Shipwreck' n38.

A FISH DIET

Ἰχθυοφαγία

First printed in the February 1526 edition.

About the earlier history of this colloquy – when it was undertaken, or how long the writing took, or when it was completed and laid aside until Froben was ready to issue a new edition of the *Colloquia* – we know little or nothing. Sometimes internal evidence can give us clues. In the case of ‘A Pilgrimage for Religion’s Sake’ and ‘A Fish Diet’ there is reason to think some lines were changes or additions dating from 1523 or 1524. Nor would that be surprising if we keep track of Erasmus’ experiences, moods, and opinions during 1522–5. See further James D. Tracy ‘On the Composition Dates of Seven of Erasmus’ Writings’ *BHR* 31 (1969) 362–4.

Necessarily the *terminus ad quem* of ‘A Fish Diet’ is January 1526, because the imagined speech of Charles v to his foe, Francis I, alludes to the French king’s captivity after the battle of Pavia (24 February 1525). The emperor says ‘I grant you life and liberty’ (688:40), words which, to fit the meaning of the paragraph, would be applicable any time after Pavia. The royal prisoner was held in Spain. His release was not arranged until the Treaty of Madrid was made in January 1526, and he was not actually freed until two months later (see n79 below). Erasmus’ memories of his visit to Johann von Botzheim’s splendid home in Constance in September 1522 ‘nearly two years ago’ were still fresh when he wrote the pages on his distracting illness there (714:13–33, and cf Allen Ep 1342:333–54 / CWE Ep 1342:369–90). So were his impressions of a more recent visit to another old friend, Udalricus Zasius, in Freiburg in March 1523; he writes of this to Zasius soon after the visit (Ep 1353, and see 713:18–714:8 and notes below). These passages and the vivid description of a band of drunken revellers near Basel in that same month (Allen Ep 1353:160–76 / CWE Ep 1353 179–99) suggest that at least some parts of the dialogue may have been written in 1523 or 1524. Another example is the close similarity between a cynical remark in the same letter of March 1523 (Allen Ep 1353:173–6 / CWE Ep 1353:195–9) and the butcher’s comment in the colloquy that no one is shocked to see a Carthusian the worse for drink, but that if the monk has tasted meat he is deemed deserving of perpetual imprisonment (705:16–20 below). Again, what is said in the colloquy about punishment of contumacious and seditious conduct brings to mind Erasmus’ interest in the lurid case of his Basel neighbour Steinschnider, who was executed in the spring of 1523 after horrible tortures (see n263 below).

The word ἰχθυοφαγία ‘fish-eating’ occurs in the commentary on Homer’s *Iliad* by Eustathius of Thessalonica (twelfth century) 135:9 (ed G. Stallbaum, 4 vols [Leipzig 1827–30] I 111). Adjectival forms of the word are found in ancient authors, for example Herodotus 3.19, Strabo 720, 770, and Pausanias 1.33.4. Eustathius, whose commentaries on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are recommended to teachers in Erasmus’ *De ratione studii* (LB I 527B / CWE 24 683:20–1) is cited forty-eight times in the *Adagia* (Phillips ‘Adages’ 397).

The complexity of the topics examined in this the longest of the colloquies, and the nuances of some questions and answers, require us to read deliberately before deciding which of the opinions expressed are Erasmus’ own considered judgments and which are included to heighten the characterization or provide local colour. The structure of the work and the manner in which the talk shifts from raillery to seriousness, from jokes or stories to scriptural exegesis, casuistry, and moralizing permit the author to speak his mind freely on some persistent problems, yet without allowing his readers to forget who and what his characters are. The choice of low-life men to discuss some fundamental religious questions posed an aesthetic and ethical problem, that of decorum. Fishmongers and butchers have ever been regarded as men whose trades are among the most vulgar (Cicero *De officiis* 1.42.150); and as Erasmus says elsewhere, attempts by brash or uninformed laymen to argue about profound subjects can be ridiculous (*Supputatio* LB IX 636E). But these laymen are not offensively brash, and they are far from ignorant. Their social rank is mean, as they themselves remind us, yet they have native intelligence. One speaks of reading the Bible in a vernacular translation (681:18–19); the other says that he owes some of his ideas to acquaintance with the Dominicans to whom he sells fish (684:17–21). Both agree that their present conversation would seem presumptuous to many (720:32–5). This is informal dialogue, however, not formal debate; were it the latter it would seem intolerably pretentious. We soon begin to realize that these tradesmen are shrewd reasoners, and by the time a perceptive reader is well into the examination of ‘Judaism’ and subsequent questions he has no difficulty in recognizing the main ideas in the dialogue as typically Erasmian. They run through all of Erasmus’ moral and religious treatises, commentaries on Scripture, and homilies. The fundamental topic here is Christian liberty – a favourite theme – as contrasted with ‘Judaism’: the contrast between Law and gospel, letter and spirit, a subject examined earlier in ‘The Profane Feast’ and ‘The Godly Feast.’ In the present colloquy it is introduced cleverly by banter on fasting, but this banter gives way to discussion, with enough learning added to make it profitable and with sufficient humour, personal allusion, and anecdote to keep it readable. See ‘The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*’ (1104:10–28) for a neat summary of purposes and methods in this dialogue.

Usually the fishmonger offers more conventional and conservative or official views than the butcher, but this is not always so. Erasmus is too careful an artist to give one speaker all the good lines and proper answers. We notice also that often assertions or judgments are qualified by 'so they say' (as at 685:16), 'it is not certain' (684:30), 'didn't you see' (686:25), 'does it seem right to you' (688:14), 'I'm inclined to doubt it' (689:39), 'I think' (712:7). We meet some teasing ambiguities. Neither speaker is always voicing Erasmus' opinions. Argument, anecdote, and repartee make the dialogue plausible, but Erasmus allows the reader (who after all is expected to know something about the subject) to follow the exchange of views intelligently, draw the right inferences, and reach the right or most probable conclusions.

The background of the major questions treated in the dialogue, their place in Erasmus' thought and writings, and the numerous allusions to earlier and contemporary persons and to subsidiary topics are elucidated in the notes.

BUTCHER, FISHMONGER

Butcher Tell me, you unsavoury seller of salt fish, haven't you bought a rope yet?

5 **Fishmonger** A rope, butcher?

Butcher Yes, a rope.

Fishmonger What for, in heaven's name?

Butcher What for? To hang yourself with – what else?¹

Fishmonger Others may buy them. I'm not yet so bored with life.

10 **Butcher** But you soon will be.

Fishmonger I hope some god turns these prophecies against the prophet instead! But what's wrong?

Butcher If you don't know, I'll tell you. Plainly there's what they call a Saguntine famine² at hand for the likes of you, so the only thing to do will

15 be to hang yourselves straightway.

Fishmonger Please, butcher, please! Let *that* happen to our enemies. How is it you've changed suddenly from a butcher into a Pythian oracle,³ to prophesy so dire a calamity?

20 **Butcher** Don't flatter yourself, it's no prophecy – this very thing is at your door.

Fishmonger You slay me. Out with it, if you've anything to bring out.

Butcher I'll bring it out – and so much the worse for you. Rome has decreed that hereafter anybody is free to eat anything he wants. What's left for you and your set, then, except starvation among your rotten salt fish?

Fishmonger Whoever wishes may eat snails or nettles, for all I care. But no one is forbidden to eat fish, is he?

Butcher No, but permission is granted to eat whatever meat one likes.

Fishmonger If what you tell me is wrong, you're the one who deserves
5 hanging; if it's correct, you're the one who'll need a rope, not I. For I expect a bigger profit from now on.

Butcher Oh, you'll have a big increase – of hunger. You'll come to utter starvation. Or – if you'd like better news – you'll live more decently hereafter, and won't wipe your filthy, scabby nose on your sleeve as usual.⁴

10 **Fishmonger** Oh-ho, we have reached the limit: the blind man reproaches the one-eyed.⁵ As if, forsooth, among butchers there were anything cleaner than that part of the body which is said to survive all efforts to wash it.⁶ I wish your news were true, but I'm afraid you make me rejoice without reason.

15 **Butcher** My news is absolutely true. But why do you expect a larger profit?

Fishmonger Because I observe human nature to be such that if a thing's forbidden, it's the more irresistible to men.

Butcher What of it?

Fishmonger When they may eat anything they like, many men will abstain
20 from meat. As among the ancients, there will be no fine dinner without fish. And so I'm glad the eating of flesh is permitted. I only wish the eating of fish were forbidden. People would eat it the more eagerly.

Butcher A holy wish, so help me!

Fishmonger I'd hope and pray for it if, like you, I thought of nothing except
25 profits,⁷ from love of which you've pledged your gross and carnivorous soul to devils.

Butcher You're quite a salty fellow even if your speech *is* unsavoury.

Fishmonger What reason persuaded Rome to relax the rule on meat-eating that had been observed for so many ages?

30 **Butcher** The plain fact of the matter has convinced them this long while. They realize, correctly, that the city is polluted and land, rivers, air, fire – and any other element there may be – corrupted by salt fish sellers; that human bodies are diseased, for eating fish fills the body with rotten humours, the source of fevers, consumption, gout, epilepsy, leprosy, and what not other
35 maladies.⁸

Fishmonger Tell me, then, Hippocrates,⁹ why is it forbidden in well-governed cities to slaughter beef and hogs within the walls?¹⁰ Public health would be guarded even better if cattle didn't have their throats cut. Why is a certain quarter assigned to butchers if not because they might
40 bring a plague on the whole city if they lived in various places? Or is any kind of filth more pestilential than the blood and gore of animals?

Butcher Sheer perfume if you compare it with the stench of fish.

Fishmonger Sheer perfume to you, I suppose, but it doesn't seem so to the magistrates who bar you from the city. People who hold their noses as they pass by show how sweet your butcher shops smell; those who prefer ten

5 pimps to one butcher as neighbours show it to all the world.

Butcher But neither lakes nor whole rivers suffice to wash the rotten stench of fish off you. As is truly said, you use water in vain. A fish always smells like a fish, though you smear it with sweet ointments. What wonder that dead fish smell so when many living ones smell as soon as they're caught?¹¹

10 Meat pickled in brine keeps for many years; so far from rotting, it's even somewhat aromatic. Preserved in common salt, it lasts without spoiling.

Smoked meat acquires a not unpleasant odour. If you treat fish in just the same way, it will still smell like nothing but fish. That no stench can be compared with the rottenness of fish, infer from the fact that salt itself –

15 which is given by Nature to protect things from spoiling, and by its own native power confines and cuts off decay while at the same time it excludes whatever could cause harm from outside, drying up the humours within where decay could have started – is rotted by fish. In fish alone is salt

20 not salt. Some oversqueamish person may hold his nose as he walks by our buildings, but nobody can endure sitting in a boat with your salt fish.

Whenever travellers meet a cart filled with salt fish, what a scramble there is! What holding of noses! What spitting! What coughing! And if salt fish could somehow be brought fresh into town, as we carry slaughtered beef, the law would not overlook it.¹² What should one do, now, with those that

25 are rotten even when they're eaten? And yet how often do we see your wares condemned by the market-masters to be thrown into the river, and you fined! That would happen even more often, in fact, if the officials you bribed weren't looking out for their own private profit rather than for the public welfare. Nor is this the only way you injure the commonwealth, but

30 by a shameless plot you prevent the bringing into the city of fresher fish from somewhere else.¹³

Fishmonger As if no one ever saw a butcher fined for selling rotten pork, the hog's spotted tongue showing plainly it was diseased. Or a sheep drowned or choked in the mire; or maggots shoulders of meat whose

35 rottenness the butcher covered up by washing and then smearing it with fresh blood.

Butcher But nothing from our side matches what came from you recently: that one eel pie killed nine guests at a dinner. That's the sort of sops *you* furnish for citizens' meals.

40 **Fishmonger** You mention an accident nobody could avoid if it's fated to happen. But with you it's an almost daily occurrence to sell fattened cats for

rabbits; you'd sell dogs for hares if the short ears and hairy feet allowed. And need I mention the meat pies made of human flesh?

- Butcher** You are holding me to account for accidents and human shortcomings – something you condemned me for. Those responsible
 5 for such things should answer for them. I'm comparing trade with trade. Otherwise greengrocers would be blamed because sometimes they unsuspectingly sell hemlock or wolfsbane for cabbage;¹⁴ and pharmacists because sometimes they hand out poisons instead of medicines. No
 10 profession is so blameless that accidents of this kind never occur. Though you people may observe all the rules, what you peddle is poisonous. If you were to sell a torpedo,¹⁵ sea serpent,¹⁶ or sea hare¹⁷ taken in with the catch, that would be an accident, not a crime; you would have no more responsibility than does a physician who sometimes kills a patient whom he is treating. This mischief could be borne if you displayed your rotten stuff only in winter;
 15 sharp weather would allay the pestilence. But now you add rotten matter to the burning heat of summer; autumn, which is harmful enough by itself, you make worse. When the year is young and the hidden humours come forth again – not without danger to the body – you play the tyrant for two whole months¹⁸ and corrupt the youth of the reborn year by bringing decline upon
 20 it. And although this is Nature's plan, that bodies purged of unhealthful juices are reinvigorated by new ones, you load them with nothing but foul stench and gore; and if bodies have any disease, you make it worse by adding ill to ill and especially by injuring the good juices of the body. This too could be borne if you injured only bodies. But since the mental organs are harmed by
 25 changes in diet, the result is injury to the minds themselves. Generally men full of fish are themselves like fish: pale, stinking, stupid, silent.

- Fishmonger** A new Thales!¹⁹ How wise are people who live on beets? Why, as wise as beets themselves!²⁰ How wise are those who devour steers and sheep and goats? Why, as wise as steers, sheep, and goats! You sell kids as
 30 delicacies, and yet, since they're subject to epilepsy, they produce that same disease in those who are fond of meat. Wouldn't it be better to satisfy a hungry stomach with salt fish?

- Butcher** As if this were the only lie told by writers on natural history! And even if what they say were absolutely true, foods excellent in themselves are
 35 often the worst for sick bodies. We sell kids for persons with intermittent fever and consumption, not with dizziness.

Fishmonger If eating fish is so very dangerous to mortal interests, why does the wisdom of prelates and princes permit us to sell our wares all the year round, when you must observe fasts a good part of the year?

- 40 **Butcher** What business of mine is that? Maybe this was arranged by rascally physicians, to make more money.

Fishmonger What rascally physicians are you talking about, when fish have no enemies so deadly as they?²¹

Butcher Lest you mistake, my good fellow, they don't do this because they care about you, or because they love fish, since no men avoid fish more
5 scrupulously; they're merely looking out for their own profit. The more people who cough or are exhausted and ill, the better their income.

Fishmonger I shan't defend physicians here; they'll get even if ever you fall into their clutches. For my argument, the holiness displayed by the
10 ancients in their lives, the authority of those most esteemed, the sovereignty of bishops, the common custom of Christian nations suffice. If you think all these are mad, I prefer to be mad with them than sane with butchers.

Butcher You decline to defend the physicians; for my part, I shouldn't want to accuse or criticize the ancients or general customs. My practice is to venerate them, not to revile them.²²

Fishmonger In this at least you're a more wary than reverent butcher, or else I don't know you.

Butcher In my judgment, people are wise to avoid dealings with those who wield thunderbolts.²³ But what I understand from my Bible, which I read sometimes in a translation,²⁴ I shan't keep quiet about.

Fishmonger So now you turn from butcher into theologian.

Butcher I think that as soon as the first men came forth from the moist earth, they had strong, healthy bodies. Their longevity proves that. Next, paradise was by far the most comfortable spot, with the most healthful climate. In
25 such a place such bodies could live without food by draughts of air and by the fragrance of herbs, trees, and flowers everywhere, especially since the earth of itself brought forth everything in abundance without man's labour; there was neither death nor old age. Tending such a garden was really pleasure rather than toil.²⁵

Fishmonger So far you're probably right.

Butcher From the varied yield of so extremely fertile a garden, nothing was forbidden save one tree.²⁶

Fishmonger Absolutely true.

Butcher And that for no other reason than that through their obedience they might acknowledge their lord and creator.

Fishmonger Correct.

Butcher In fact, I believe everything produced by the earth when new was finer and of better flavour than the earth bears now, when it is growing old and almost feeble.²⁷

Fishmonger Granted.

Butcher And especially in paradise.

Fishmonger Perfectly true.

Butcher So eating was a matter of pleasure there, not of necessity.

Fishmonger I've heard that.

Butcher And to refrain from slaughtering living creatures was humanity, not sanctity.

- 5 **Fishmonger** I don't know about that. I read that the eating of meat was permitted after the Flood;²⁸ that it was forbidden prior to the Flood, I don't read. What reason was there to allow it if it was already allowed?

- Butcher** Why don't we eat frogs? Not because they're forbidden but because we loathe them.²⁹ How do you know whether on that occasion God was
10 advising what food human frailty required, not what food he would allow?

Fishmonger I'm no soothsayer.³⁰

- Butcher** But, we read, as soon as man was created: 'Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.'³¹ Of what use is dominion if it does not permit
15 eating?

Fishmonger Cruel master! So you eat your servants, maids, wife, and children? In the same fashion you even eat the chamber-pot you're owner of?

- Butcher** But hear me in turn, you unseasoned salt fish seller. Other creatures have their uses, and the name of master is not inappropriate. A horse carries
20 me on his back. A camel bears burdens. What can you do with a fish except eat it?

- Fishmonger** As though there aren't, in fact, countless medicines made from fish! In the next place, many things are created merely to please the sight of man and bring him to admire the creator. Perhaps you don't believe dolphins
25 carry men on their backs?³² Then there are fish, such as the sea urchin, that foretell the approach of a storm.³³ Or wouldn't you like such a servant in your home?

- Butcher** Well, granting that before the Flood it was lawful to eat only the fruits of the earth,³⁴ it was no great matter to abstain from those foods which
30 the body did not need and which involved the cruelty of slaughtering. You'll admit that eating meat was first allowed on account of the weakness of human bodies. The Flood introduced cold, and today we see that in cold regions men naturally have larger appetites; also the Flood wiped out or corrupted the produce of the earth.

- 35 **Fishmonger** Agreed.

Butcher And yet after the Flood they lived to be over two hundred years old.

Fishmonger I believe that.

- Butcher** Why then did God permit those hardy people to eat anything
40 without exception and afterwards limit weaker and shorter-lived men to certain kinds of meat, as Moses commanded?³⁵

Fishmonger As if it's up to me to give a reason for what God does! Still, I think God did then what is usually done by masters who check their favour towards servants when they see them abusing their lords' kindness. Thus we take away beans and oats from an overspirited horse and feed him
 5 little hay;³⁶ and we subdue him with sharper bit and spurs. The human race had thrown off all reverence and plunged into great licentiousness, as though there were no God at all. It was at this time that the barriers of laws, limitations of ceremonies, and restraints of threats and commandments were devised, to bring men to their senses.

10 **Butcher** Then why don't the restraints of that Law remain today?

Fishmonger Because the harshness of carnal servitude was removed after we were adopted by means of the gospel as sons of God.³⁷ When more abundant grace has touched us, commandments have less importance.

Butcher Since God calls his covenant eternal,³⁸ and Christ denied that
 15 he destroyed the Law but declared that he fulfilled it,³⁹ how did later generations have the presumption to abrogate a good deal of the Law?

Fishmonger That Law was not given to the gentiles,⁴⁰ and therefore the apostles thought it wise not to burden them with the vexation of circumcision,⁴¹ lest they put their hope of salvation in bodily rites, like Jews
 20 even today, rather than in faith and love of God.

Butcher I'm not talking about gentiles. What passage of Scripture openly teaches that Jews converted to the gospel are freed from subjection to the Mosaic law?⁴²

Fishmonger That was foretold by the prophets, who promise a new covenant
 25 and a new spirit;⁴³ and they present a God who abominates the feast days of the Jews, turning away from their burnt offerings, despising their feasts, rejecting their oblations, desiring a people circumcised in the heart.⁴⁴ The Lord himself, who offers his body and blood to his disciples, calling it the new covenant,⁴⁵ has confirmed their promises. If nothing of the old is
 30 abolished, why is this called new? The Lord has abrogated the Jewish⁴⁶ distinction of foods, not by his example, to be sure, but by his judgment, when he denies that a man is defiled by foods taken into his stomach and voided in private.⁴⁷ He teaches Peter the same thing in a vision;⁴⁸ in fact Peter himself teaches it by eating with Paul and others the common foods
 35 from which the Law had bidden them abstain. Paul teaches it everywhere in his letters,⁴⁹ nor is there any doubt that what Christian people follow today was handed down as though from the apostles and has finally reached us. So the Jews were not so much emancipated as weaned from superstitious
 40 reverence of the Law, as though from milk to which they were thoroughly accustomed but which was now inappropriate.⁵⁰ And the Law was not abrogated, but that part of it which was now superfluous was bidden

to yield. Foliage and blossoms are harbingers of fruit; when the tree is heavy with it, nobody misses the blossoms. Neither does anyone mourn his son's lost youth when the boy is grown up. Nor does anyone need lanterns and torches when the sun has risen. It is unnecessary to look

- 5 for a tutor when a son who is already grown up assumes his freedom and, in his turn, has authority over the tutor.⁵¹ A pledge ceases to be a pledge when the promise is fulfilled. An engaged girl, before marriage, comforts herself with her fiancé's letters; she kisses the gifts that come from him; she embraces pictures of him. But when she possesses him in
10 person, out of love for him she sets aside the things she loved before. Now at first the Jews were wrenched with difficulty from their accustomed ways, as though a child used to milk should, when grown, bawl for the breast, scorning solid food. And so they were weaned almost by force from those allegories or shadows⁵² or temporal consolations, that
15 they might now turn entirely to him whom that Law had promised and foreshadowed.

Butcher Who would have expected so much theology from a seller of salt fish?

- Fishmonger** Usually I supply fish to the Dominican house in our city, so it
20 happens that they often lunch with me, and I sometimes with them. I picked up these ideas from their disputations.

- Butcher** Indeed you deserve to become a seller of fresh fish instead of salt fish. Solve this one: if you were a Jew – and I'm not quite sure if you are or not – and were absolutely about to starve, would you eat pork⁵³ or would
25 you choose to die?

Fishmonger What I would do, I know; what I should do, I don't know – yet.

Butcher God forbade both: 'Thou shalt not kill' and 'Thou shalt not eat the flesh of swine.'⁵⁴ In such a circumstance, which commandment should yield to which?

- 30 **Fishmonger** In the first place, it is not certain that God forbade the eating of swine's flesh because he wants us to seek death rather than, by eating it, to preserve life. For the Lord himself excuses David, who broke the commandment by eating the sacred bread.⁵⁵ And in the Babylonian exile many things prescribed by the Law were not observed by the Jews. Therefore
35 I should think that that law which Nature herself also gave, and which is perpetual and inviolable, ought to be held more authoritative than one that did not always exist and was later to be abrogated.

Butcher Why then were the Maccabean brothers praised for preferring death under cruel torture to tasting swine's flesh?⁵⁶

- 40 **Fishmonger** Because, I suppose, this eating commanded by the king involved renunciation of the whole law of the nation, just as circumcision,

which the Jews tried to force on gentiles, included adherence to the whole Law, as a down payment binds one to fulfil the entire contract.

Butcher If, therefore, that grosser part of the Law was rightly removed after the dawn of the gospel, why do we now see those same things, or more
 5 burdensome ones, restored, particularly when the Lord calls his yoke easy and Peter, in Acts, calls the Jewish law hard,⁵⁷ a law that neither the Jews nor their fathers were able to bear? Circumcision was removed⁵⁸ but baptism took its place⁵⁹ – almost a harder condition, I should say. Circumcision was postponed until the eighth day,⁶⁰ and if in the interval some accident
 10 carried off the child the pledge of circumcision was taken for the deed. When children are scarcely out of their mothers' wombs, we plunge them into cold water which has stood (I won't say stank) for a long time in a stone font;⁶¹ and if a child dies when one day old, or dies at birth, through no fault of parents or attendants, the wretched creature is consigned to eternal
 15 damnation.⁶²

Fishmonger So they say.

Butcher The sabbath is removed, and yet not removed but transformed into the Lord's day. What's the difference? The Mosaic law prescribed a few days' fast; how many have we added to those! In the choice of food, how
 20 much freer than we were the Jews, who could eat sheep, capons, partridges, and kids the whole year long! No kind of clothing was prohibited to them except that woven of wool and flax.⁶³ Nowadays, besides so many prescribed and proscribed styles and colours of clothing,⁶⁴ are added various modes of shaving the head, to say nothing meanwhile of the burden of confession
 25 and the load of human regulations, complicated tithes, tighter restrictions governing marriage, new laws of kinship through marriage, and many others that make the Jewish law seem not a little easier in this respect than is our lot.⁶⁵

Fishmonger You're quite mistaken, butcher. Christ's yoke should not be
 30 judged by the standard you suppose. A Christian is bound by many things, by more difficult ones, and finally by heavier penalty; yet the greater power of faith and love added to them renders easy what are by nature extremely oppressive.

Butcher But since the Spirit once descended from heaven in the shape of fiery tongues⁶⁶ and enriched the hearts of believers by the most plenteous gift of faith and love, why is the weight of the Law lifted, as if from persons weak and endangered under an unjust burden? Why does Peter, divinely inspired, call the burden intolerable?⁶⁷

Fishmonger It was taken away partly that Judaism⁶⁸ might not hinder the
 40 glory of the gospel, as it had begun to do, and that gentiles might not be alienated from Christ by hatred of the Law. Among the gentiles were many

weak persons, for whom there was a double danger: first, lest they believe no one could gain salvation without keeping the Law; second, lest they prefer to remain pagans rather than accept the yoke of the Mosaic law. It was necessary to entice the weak minds of these people as though by some
 5 bait of freedom. Again, in order to relieve those who thought there was no hope of salvation by acceptance of the gospel without keeping the Law, circumcision, sabbaths, dietary rules, and other such matters, either they simply removed the regulations or they changed them to something else. Furthermore, Peter's protestation that he could not endure the burden of the
 10 Law is not to be understood as referring to the kind of person he then was, since there was nothing he could not bear, but to the weak, dull-minded Jews, who chewed wearily the husk of barley, not yet having tasted the marrow of the Spirit.

Butcher In argument *you're* fairly dull-minded. – But today there are fully
 15 as many reasons, it seems to me, why these corporal observances ought to be treated as matters of choice, not of obligation.

Fishmonger How so?

Butcher Recently I saw a painting, on a very large canvas, of the whole world. From it I learned how small a portion of the world wholeheartedly
 20 and sincerely professes Christianity: part of western Europe, of course; then another part towards the north; a third stretching far away to the south; Poland seemed to be as far as the fourth part went, towards the east. The rest of the world contains either barbarians, not so very different from brutes, or schismatics or heretics, or both.

Fishmonger But didn't you see the whole southern shore and the scattered islands identified as Christian?⁶⁹

Butcher I did, and I learned that plunder had been carried away from there; but I did not hear that Christianity had been brought in. Since, therefore, the harvest is so abundant,⁷⁰ it seems most urgent for the spreading of the
 30 Christian religion that as the apostles removed the burden of the Mosaic law lest the gentiles backslide, so now, for attracting the weak, the rules about some things ought to be abolished. The world was saved without these in the beginning, and it could be saved now if only it had faith and gospel love. I hear and see that there are a great many who make places,
 35 vestments, foods, fasts, gestures,⁷¹ and chants the essence of religion and judge their neighbour by these, contrary to gospel commandment. Whence it happens that though everything is done in the name of faith and Christian love, both are destroyed by superstition about these matters. He who puts his trust in deeds of this kind is very far from the gospel faith; and far
 40 is he from Christian love who, on account of food or drink that anybody can properly use, provokes his brother, for whose freedom Christ died.

What bitter quarrels do we witness among Christians, what hateful slanders, because a garment is girdled or dyed differently,⁷² or because of seafood or land food! Had this evil infected only a few, it could be ignored. Nowadays we see the whole world shaken by reason of these deadly disputes. If these

5 and ones like them were got rid of, we could live in greater peace, not bothering about ceremonies⁷³ but straining only after those things Christ taught, and other races would more readily embrace a religion joined with freedom.

Fishmonger Outside the habitation of the church there is no salvation.⁷⁴

10 **Butcher** Granted.

Fishmonger Whoever does not recognize the Roman pontiff is outside the church.

Butcher No objection.⁷⁵

Fishmonger But he who disregards his ordinances doesn't recognize him.

15 **Butcher** And for that very reason I hope that in the future this pope (Clement by name, most clement in spirit and holiness),⁷⁶ for the purpose of attracting all races into the fellowship of the church, may mitigate all conditions that have heretofore appeared to estrange some peoples from union with the Roman see; and that he may prefer the gain of the gospel

20 to carrying out his own prerogative in everything. Every day I hear old complaints about annates,⁷⁷ pardons, dispensations,⁷⁸ and other taxes, about burdened churches; but I believe he'll so curtail all these that none but the shameless will venture to complain hereafter.

Fishmonger Would that all monarchs did the same! I have no doubt whatever

25 that Christianity, now confined within narrow limits, would spread most fruitfully if the barbarous nations realized they were called not to human servitude, but to gospel freedom, and that they were sought out not for the purpose of plunder, but for the fellowship of happiness and holiness. When they have united with us and found in us truly Christian behaviour, they

30 will contribute voluntarily more than any force could wring from them.

Butcher That will soon happen, I predict, if pestilential Strife, who has brought about a calamitous war between the two most powerful kings in the world,⁷⁹ takes her leave, damn her!⁸⁰

Fishmonger And I'm surprised this wasn't accomplished long ago, since

35 nothing more humane than Francis can be imagined; and the emperor Charles, I believe, was indoctrinated by his tutors with the principle that the larger his empire grows by fortune, the more mercy and kindness he himself should add.⁸¹ Besides, one of his age⁸² usually has a special talent for affability and kindness.

40 **Butcher** You could find nothing lacking in either man.

Fishmonger Then what delays what the whole world longs for?

Butcher The lawyers are still arguing about boundaries;⁸³ besides, you know the uproars of comedies always end in marriage.⁸⁴ Princes conclude their tragedies in the same fashion. But in comedies the marriages occur quickly; here the business between great men is carried on with vast exertions. And
 5 it's better for a wound to be healed somewhat more slowly than to break out soon again as an ulcer.

Fishmonger Do you think these matches are based on a strong bond of union?

Butcher I'd like to, certainly, but I notice that most wars usually originate in
 10 these marriages; and if a war does break out among those who at the time are connected by marriage, the fire spreads more widely and is brought under control with more difficulty.⁸⁵

Fishmonger I admit that and acknowledge what you say to be very true.

Butcher But does it seem right to you that because of the bickerings of
 15 lawyers and delays over treaties,⁸⁶ the whole world should endure such woe? Truly nothing's ever safe now, and while there's neither war nor peace the worst men have a free hand.

Fishmonger It's not my place to talk about the policies of princes. But if someone made me emperor, I know what I'd do.

Butcher See, we make you emperor, and simultaneously Roman pontiff too,
 20 if you like. What do you do?

Fishmonger Make me emperor and king of France instead.

Butcher All right, be both.

Fishmonger Taking a vow of peace, I would at once proclaim a truce
 25 throughout my entire realm and demobilize the army, threatening with capital punishment anyone who so much as touched another man's hen. Thus with my advantage, or (I should say) with the public's advantage, of a state of peace, I would negotiate a settlement about national boundaries or terms of marriage.

Butcher Have you no stronger bonds of agreement than marriage?
 30

Fishmonger Yes, I think so.

Butcher Share them with me.

Fishmonger If I were emperor, I'd conclude an agreement without delay with the king of France in this manner:⁸⁷ 'Brother, some evil spirit'⁸⁸ stirred
 35 up this war between us, yet the struggle was not for survival but for power. You proved your worth as a brave and vigorous warrior. Fortune was on my side and of a king made you a captive.⁸⁹ What happened to you could have happened to me, and your disaster is a warning to us all of the human lot. We have learned how this kind of conflict is injurious to both sides. Come
 40 now, let us contend in a different fashion. I grant you life and liberty; I accept you as an ally instead of an enemy. Let us forget all past misfortune.

Return free and unransomed to your people, keep your possessions, be a good neighbour, and hereafter let there be only this one rivalry between us, that each strive to outdo the other in good faith, duty, and generosity; let each of us try, not to rule a larger kingdom than the other one has, but to
 5 govern his own dominion more righteously. In the earlier contest I was lucky enough to win. Whoever wins *this* one will gain a victory far more glorious. This reputation for mercy will surely bring me more true fame than if I had annexed all France to my rule. And appreciation of your gratitude will win you more renown than if you had driven me out of Italy entirely. Don't envy
 10 me the praise I covet. In turn I will so promote your praise that you will gladly be indebted to this friend.'

Butcher Certainly France, nay the whole world, might thus be bound in friendship. For if this sore is covered up by bad terms rather than truly healed, I fear that when the wound is opened on some occasion soon
 15 afterwards, the old poison may burst out with more harm than ever.⁹⁰

Fishmonger How magnificent and laudable a glory would this humaneness give to Charles throughout the world! What nation would not willingly submit to a prince so humane and forbearing?

Butcher You've played emperor well enough; now play pope.

20 **Fishmonger** It would take a very long time to follow up every single topic. I'll summarize. I would so conduct myself that the whole world understood the ruler of the church was one who longed for nothing other than the glory of Christ and the salvation of all mankind. This would truly cure the prejudice against the papal name and bring real and lasting glory. – But
 25 meanwhile we've fallen off the donkey, as the saying is.⁹¹ We've strayed far away from our plan.

Butcher I'll quickly get you back to the road. You say, then, that papal laws are binding on all who are in the church?⁹²

Fishmonger I say so.

30 **Butcher** On penalty of hell-fire?

Fishmonger They say so.

Butcher The laws of bishops, too?⁹³

Fishmonger In each one's jurisdiction, I believe.

Butcher And of abbots?⁹⁴

35 **Fishmonger** I hesitate to say, for they take up their rule on certain conditions, and they cannot burden their people with regulations unless authorized by the entire order.

Butcher What if a bishop receives his office on the same conditions?

Fishmonger I'm inclined to doubt it.

40 **Butcher** Has the pope power to rescind what a bishop has ordained?

Fishmonger I think he has.

Butcher Can nobody annul what the pope has decreed?

Fishmonger Nobody.

Butcher Then how is it we hear of papal judgments rescinded on the ground that popes were misinformed, and of regulations of earlier popes superseded
5 by those of later ones because the former deviated from true piety?⁹⁵

Fishmonger Those regulations were ones that crept in for a season, for ignorance about a person or fact can occur in a pope as a human being. But what proceeds from the authority of a universal council is a heavenly oracle and carries weight equal to that of the Gospels, or surely almost equal.⁹⁶

10 **Butcher** Is it permissible to doubt concerning the Gospels?

Fishmonger Mind your language: surely not even to doubt councils solemnly convened and conducted, whose acts are proclaimed and received under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

15 **Butcher** What if one should doubt whether these attributes belong to a council that is called in question, as I hear the Council of Basel is rejected by some and that of Constance is not accepted by everyone. I mean (omitting all mention of the last Lateran Council), doubt about those now considered orthodox?⁹⁷

Fishmonger Let those who wish, doubt at their peril; I don't want to doubt.

20 **Butcher** Then Peter had authority to establish new laws?⁹⁸

Fishmonger He had.

Butcher And Paul too, with the other apostles?

Fishmonger Each of them had in his churches appointed to him by Peter or Christ.

25 **Butcher** And is the power for Peter's successors equal to that of Peter himself?

Fishmonger Why not?

Butcher Then as much honour is due to a rescript of the Roman pontiff as to the Epistles of Peter? And as much to the regulations⁹⁹ of bishops as to Paul's
30 Epistles?

Fishmonger Indeed I think even more is due if they prescribe and legislate with authority.

Butcher But is it lawful to doubt whether Peter and Paul wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?

35 **Fishmonger** Oh, no; whoever doubted it would be a heretic.

Butcher Do you think the same of the rescripts and regulations of popes and bishops?

Fishmonger Of a pope, I do think so; of bishops, I'm not sure, except that it's our duty to suspect no one falsely unless the matter plainly calls for
40 suspicion.¹⁰⁰

Butcher Why does the Spirit more readily allow a bishop to err than a pope?

Fishmonger Because it's more dangerous for the head to err.

Butcher If the regulations of prelates are worth so much,¹⁰¹ what does the Lord mean in Deuteronomy by threatening so sternly against anyone's adding or taking away anything from the Law?¹⁰²

- 5 **Fishmonger** One doesn't add to the Law by explaining more fully what was obscure and suggesting ways of keeping it. Nor does he take away who adjusts the Law to the capacity of his hearers, bringing out some aspects and concealing others, as the time requires.

- Butcher** The regulations of scribes and Pharisees weren't binding, were they?

Fishmonger I think not.

Butcher Why?

Fishmonger Because they had authority to teach, not to make laws.

- 15 **Butcher** Which power seems greater, that of ordaining human laws or of interpreting divine ones?

Fishmonger Ordaining human ones.

Butcher I disagree. For the judgment of one who has the right of interpreting carries the weight of divine law.

Fishmonger I don't quite follow.

- 20 **Butcher** I'll explain more clearly. Divine law commands us to help a parent. According to the Pharisees' interpretation, whatever is placed in the offering¹⁰³ is given to one's father, because God is the Father of all men. Doesn't divine law yield to this interpretation?

Fishmonger That is surely a false interpretation.

- 25 **Butcher** But after the authority of interpreting has once been handed over to them, how am I to tell whose interpretation is right, especially if the interpreters differ among themselves?¹⁰⁴

Fishmonger If the meaning generally accepted hasn't satisfied you, follow the authority of prelates. That's the safest course.

- 30 **Butcher** Then the authority of scribes and Pharisees has descended upon theologians and preachers?

Fishmonger Yes.

Butcher But I hear no men insisting more often, 'Hear, I say unto you' than those who have no experience in theological debates.¹⁰⁵

- 35 **Fishmonger** You should hear them all fairly but judiciously, provided they don't simply drivel; in that case the people ought to hiss them off, so they'll recognize their own folly. On the other hand, you should have confidence in anyone with a doctor's degree.

- 40 **Butcher** But among these I find some much more ignorant and absurd than those who are completely uneducated. And I see extraordinary disagreement among the most learned men.

Fishmonger Select the best explanations and leave the unexplained matters to others, always adopting those views approved by the majority of lords and commons.

5 **Butcher** That's the safer course, I know. Are there unjust ordinances too, then, as there are false interpretations?

Fishmonger Whether there are, let others decide. I think it's possible.

Butcher Did Annas and Caiaphas¹⁰⁶ have authority to ordain laws?

Fishmonger They did.

10 **Butcher** Their regulations about anything did not bind on pain of hell-fire, did they?

Fishmonger I don't know.

Butcher Suppose Annas had ordained that no one home from the market-place should eat without washing: he who ate unwashed wouldn't be guilty of an offence deserving hell-fire?¹⁰⁷

15 **Fishmonger** I don't think so, unless he made his offence worse by contempt of public authority.

Butcher Do all of God's commandments bind on pain of hell-fire?¹⁰⁸

Fishmonger I suppose not, for God forbade all sin however venial, if we may believe theologians.

20 **Butcher** Perhaps 'venial' sin too would bring us to hell, did not God in his mercy help our helplessness.

Fishmonger Sounds sensible. I wouldn't venture to swear to it.

25 **Butcher** When the Israelites were exiled in Babylon,¹⁰⁹ the rite of circumcision, besides a great many others enjoined by the Law, was omitted in many instances. Did all these men perish?

Fishmonger God knows.

Butcher If a Jew at point of starvation were secretly to eat pork, would he be guilty of a crime?

30 **Fishmonger** In my judgment, necessity would excuse the act, seeing that David was defended by the voice of the Lord for eating, in violation of the Law, the sacred bread called the 'shewbread.' Not only did he eat of it but with it he fed also his fellow fugitives, who were heathen.¹¹⁰

35 **Butcher** If the same sort of necessity compelled one to choose between dying of hunger or committing a theft, which should he choose – death or theft?

Fishmonger Perhaps in that event theft would not be theft.

Butcher Ho there, what do I hear? Isn't an egg an egg?¹¹¹

Fishmonger Especially if one took something with the intention of restoring it and of gaining the owner's forgiveness as soon as possible.

40 **Butcher** What if a man were going to die unless he bore false witness against his neighbour? Which should he choose?

Fishmonger Death.

Butcher What if he could save his life by committing adultery?

Fishmonger Death will be preferable.

Butcher What if you could escape death by fornication?¹¹²

5 **Fishmonger** One should die, rather, so they say.

Butcher Why doesn't this egg cease to be an egg, particularly if no violence or injury results?

Fishmonger Injury to the girl's body results.

Butcher What if you could save your life by perjury?¹¹³

10 **Fishmonger** You ought to die instead.

Butcher What if you could save it by a harmless little white lie?¹¹⁴

Fishmonger They teach that death should be preferred. But I should have thought that in an emergency, or when some great public good is involved, a lie of this kind would either be no crime at all or else a very petty one, unless
15 it encouraged¹¹⁵ the habit of dangerous falsehoods as well. Suppose that by a harmless lie he could save the bodies and souls of his whole nation: which would a good man choose? Would he shun the lie?

Butcher What others would do, I don't know. I myself would not shrink from telling fifteen Homeric lies¹¹⁶ and I would soon wipe away that slight
20 stain with holy water.

Fishmonger I'd do the same.

Butcher So not just whatever is commanded or forbidden by God binds one on pain of hell-fire.

Fishmonger Apparently not.

25 **Butcher** The extent of obligation, therefore, depends not only on the author of the law but on the substance of it, since some laws yield to necessity and some don't.

Fishmonger So it seems.

Butcher What if a priest whose life were at stake could save himself by
30 marrying? Which should he choose?

Fishmonger Death.

Butcher Since divine law yields to necessity, why does this human law¹¹⁷ play the part of Terminus,¹¹⁸ yielding to none?

Fishmonger It's not a law but a vow that stands in the way.¹¹⁹

35 **Butcher** What if someone had vowed to visit Jerusalem¹²⁰ but could not do so except with certain loss of life: will he refrain from going¹²¹ or will he die?

Fishmonger Die, unless released from the vow by the Roman pontiff.

Butcher Why is one vow remitted, another scarcely so?

40 **Fishmonger** Because one is a solemn vow, the other a private one.

Butcher What is a solemn one?

Fishmonger One that is commonly made.¹²²

Butcher Then isn't the other kind, which is made every day, solemn too?

Fishmonger It's made, but privately.

Butcher Then if a monk privately makes a promise to an abbot, that would
5 not be a solemn vow?

Fishmonger You're joking. A private vow is remitted more easily because broken with less scandal, and he who makes it does so with the intention of changing his mind if it suits him to do this.

Butcher Then do those who privately pledge themselves to perpetual
10 chastity vow with this intention?

Fishmonger They should.

Butcher So perpetual is also not perpetual? What if a Carthusian monk were faced with the necessity of eating meat or dying: which should he choose?

Fishmonger Physicians teach that no meat is so efficacious but that *aurum*
15 *potabile*¹²³ and jewels might produce the same result.

Butcher Which is more useful, then: to rescue with gold and jewels a man in danger or by the price of these things to save many who are in peril of their lives and to give a sick man a chicken?¹²⁴

Fishmonger I hesitate to say.

Butcher Yet the eating of fish or meat is not among those things they call
20 essential.

Fishmonger Let's leave the Carthusians to their own judge.

Butcher Let's talk in general terms. Keeping the sabbath is stressed earnestly, frequently, and at length in the law of Moses.¹²⁵

Fishmonger True.

Butcher Then should I save an endangered city by violating the sabbath or not?

Fishmonger But meantime do you take me for a Jew?

Butcher Yes, and a circumcised one, too.

Fishmonger The Lord himself solved this problem: the sabbath is made for
30 man, not the contrary.¹²⁶

Butcher Will that rule prevail, then, in all human regulations?¹²⁷

Fishmonger It will unless something stands in the way.

Butcher What if the lawmaker should issue his law, not with the intention
35 of binding everyone on pain of hell-fire, no, or even on pain of any criminal guilt, but wanting his regulation to have no more force than that of an admonition?

Fishmonger My good friend, it is not the prerogative of the lawmaker to say how binding the law shall be.¹²⁸ He exercised his authority in making
40 the law, but to what degree it binds or does not bind one is in God's hands.

Butcher Why then do we hear our parish priests crying daily from the pulpit: 'Tomorrow you must fast on pain of eternal damnation,'¹²⁹ if we aren't certain how far a human law binds us?

Fishmonger They do that to frighten the obstinate more; for I think these
5 words apply to them.

Butcher But sometimes I'm uncertain whether they do frighten the obstinate by such pronouncements. Certainly they throw the weaker brethren into anxiety or danger.

Fishmonger It's hard to look out for both.

10 **Butcher** Do custom and law have the same force?

Fishmonger Sometimes custom is stronger.

Butcher Accordingly, then, even if those who introduce a custom don't intend to set a trap for anyone, the custom may nevertheless be binding whether they like it or not?¹³⁰

15 **Fishmonger** I think so.

Butcher It can impose a burden but not remove it?

Fishmonger Of course.

Butcher So you see now, I expect, how dangerous it is for new laws to be imposed by men if no necessity compels or no great advantage invites.

20 **Fishmonger** I grant it.

Butcher When the Lord says, 'Swear not at all,'¹³¹ he doesn't make any swearing whatever liable to hell-fire?

Fishmonger I don't think so. For that is a counsel, not a precept.¹³²

Butcher But how can I be sure, when he forbade scarcely anything else more
25 explicitly or severely than swearing?

Fishmonger You'll learn from the Doctors.

Butcher And when Paul gives counsel, that is not binding on pain of hell-fire?

Fishmonger Not at all.

30 **Butcher** Why?

Fishmonger Because he doesn't want to set a snare for the weak.

Butcher Then it *is* in the lawmaker's power to bind under penalty of hell-fire or not to bind. And it *is* righteous to warn against ensnaring the weak with just any regulations.¹³³

35 **Fishmonger** Yes.

Butcher And if Paul was guarded in this respect, much more ought priests, of whose inspiration we are uncertain, to be guarded.

Fishmonger Granted.

Butcher But a little while ago you were denying that the degree to which a
40 law binds us is in the power of the lawmaker.

Fishmonger Well, now I give it as counsel, not law.

Butcher Nothing is easier than to change the word. Is ‘Thou shalt not steal’¹³⁴ a precept?

Fishmonger Yes.

Butcher ‘Resist not evil’?¹³⁵

5 **Fishmonger** It’s a counsel.

Butcher But this latter one looks more like a precept than the former does. At least it is in the bishops’ power whether they wish their ordinances to be precept or counsel?¹³⁶

Fishmonger It is.

10 **Butcher** But you emphatically denied that a short time ago. In fact whoever does not intend his regulation to bind anyone on pain of criminal liability sincerely intends it to be a counsel, not a precept.

Fishmonger True, but it’s not suitable for the common people to know this, lest they protest at once that whatever they don’t want to observe is a
15 counsel.

Butcher But meantime what will you do, since so many weak consciences are so miserably confused by your silence? Come now, tell me: have the learned no marks by which they can discover whether a regulation has the force of a counsel or a precept?

20 **Fishmonger** They have, as I’ve heard.

Butcher May not one know the secret?

Fishmonger You may, unless you’d want to babble.

Butcher Oh, you’ll tell it to a fish.¹³⁷

Fishmonger When you hear nothing except ‘We exhort,’ ‘We appoint,’
25 ‘We charge,’ it’s a counsel; when you hear ‘We order,’ ‘We strictly enjoin,’ especially if threats of excommunication are added, it’s a precept.¹³⁸

Butcher What if I’m in debt to my baker, and since I can’t pay I prefer to run off rather than be thrown into jail: do I sin gravely?

Fishmonger I don’t think so, unless the will to pay is lacking.

30 **Butcher** Then why am I excommunicated?¹³⁹

Fishmonger That thunderbolt¹⁴⁰ terrifies the wicked; it does not burn the innocent. And you know that among the ancient Romans too there were dreadful, threatening laws made solely for this very purpose: such as that from the Twelve Tables about cutting into pieces the body of a
35 debtor – of which not a single example survives, because it was proclaimed not for use but for terrifying.¹⁴¹ Now as a thunderbolt does not affect wax or flax but does affect brass,¹⁴² so such excommunications don’t affect poor, wretched creatures but obstinate ones. And yet – to speak frankly – to employ in trifles of this kind the thunderbolt received from
40 Christ seems almost, as the ancients used to say, wasting perfume on lentils.¹⁴³

Butcher Hasn't the head of the household the same authority in his home that a bishop has in his diocese?

Fishmonger I think he has, relatively.

Butcher And his ordinances are binding in the same manner?

5 **Fishmonger** Why not?

Butcher I decree that no one should eat onions. Just how does he who does not obey risk God's displeasure?

Fishmonger Let him see to that.

Butcher Hereafter I won't say to my family, 'I order,' but 'I admonish.'

10 **Fishmonger** You'll be wise to do so.

Butcher But I observe that my next-door neighbour is in danger, and when I've got him alone I admonish him privately to quit the company of drunkards and gamblers. Scoffing at my warning, he begins to live a more abandoned life than before. My admonition doesn't bind him in this respect?

15 **Fishmonger** So it seems.

Butcher Then we escape the trap¹⁴⁴ neither by counselling nor by exhorting.

Fishmonger No, it's not the admonition but the subject of the admonition that makes the trap. For if a brother admonished to wear sandals neglected to do so, it would be no criminal offence.

20 **Butcher** I won't inquire here to what degree physicians' orders are binding. Does a vow bind on pain of hell-fire?

Fishmonger Most certainly.

Butcher Every vow?

Fishmonger Absolutely every one, provided it be licit, legitimate, and
25 voluntary.

Butcher What do you mean by 'voluntary'?

Fishmonger What no compulsion has wrung.

Butcher What is 'compulsion'?

Fishmonger Fear befalling a steadfast man.¹⁴⁵

30 **Butcher** Even a Stoic, whom, 'if the world crashed, the ruins will strike unperturbed'?¹⁴⁶

Fishmonger Show me the Stoic and I'll tell you.

Butcher But joking aside, fear of famine or infamy¹⁴⁷ doesn't befall a steadfast man, does it?

35 **Fishmonger** Certainly. Why not?

Butcher If a daughter not yet freed from parental authority marries secretly without her parents' knowledge, and without their consent if they do know, will her vow be lawful?¹⁴⁸

Fishmonger It will.

40 **Butcher** Whether it be so, I know not. Surely if there are things which may be true, yet about which it is better to keep quiet because of the scandal to

weak natures, this is one of them. What if a girl who with parental consent has contracted a marriage¹⁴⁹ should secretly, and against her parents' wishes, dedicate herself by a vow to the order of St Clare:¹⁵⁰ will the vow be licit and legitimate?

5 **Fishmonger** If it's a solemn one.

Butcher What happens in the country, in an obscure little monastery,¹⁵¹ isn't 'solemn,' is it?

Fishmonger It is so considered.

Butcher If the same girl, in the presence of a few witnesses at home, makes
10 a vow of perpetual chastity, it will not be legitimate?

Fishmonger No.

Butcher Why?

Fishmonger Because a holier vow stands in the way.¹⁵²

Butcher If the same girl sells a piece of land, will the contract be valid?

15 **Fishmonger** I don't think so.¹⁵³

Butcher And if she gives herself into another's power, will that be valid?

Fishmonger If she dedicates herself to God.¹⁵⁴

Butcher Doesn't a private vow also dedicate a person to God? And doesn't he who receives the holy sacrament of matrimony dedicate himself to God?¹⁵⁵

20 And do those whom God joins dedicate themselves to the devil? Only of married persons has the Lord said, 'Whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.'¹⁵⁶ Besides, when a youth scarcely grown up, or an innocent girl, by parental threats, cruelty of guardians, wicked instigation of monks, flattery, and hatred, is thrust into a monastery, that's not a free vow,
25 is it?¹⁵⁷

Fishmonger If they're 'capable of wrong.'¹⁵⁸

Butcher That age is especially 'capable of wrong' in that it can be imposed upon with the greatest of ease. What if I resolve to abstain from wine on Fridays: would the resolution have the force of a vow?

30 **Fishmonger** I don't believe it would.

Butcher Then what's the difference between a fixed resolution and a vow made by silent deliberation?

Fishmonger The intention of binding one's self.

Butcher Earlier you denied that intention prevails in this circumstance.¹⁵⁹ I
35 'resolve' if I'm able and I 'vow' whether able or not?

Fishmonger You have it.

Butcher I have clouds painted on a wall¹⁶⁰ – nothing, in other words! – And so, in a resolution, content need not be considered?

Fishmonger That's my opinion.

40 **Butcher** And as we should be careful in the one respect on account of the law, so in the other, on account of a vow?

Fishmonger Right.

Butcher If the Roman pontiff ordained that no one should marry within the seventh degree of consanguinity, would he who married a relation within the sixth degree be guilty of a crime?¹⁶¹

5 **Fishmonger** I suppose so; certainly he would risk it.

Butcher What if a bishop decreed to his people that no one should have intercourse with his wife except on Monday, Thursday, and Saturday: would one who had it secretly on other days be guilty of a crime?

Fishmonger I think he would.

10 **Butcher** What if he decreed that no one eat onions?

Fishmonger What has that to do with piety?

Butcher Onions are aphrodisiacs.¹⁶² Suppose the same thing I say about onions to be said of cabbage.

Fishmonger I'm at a loss.

15 **Butcher** Why at a loss? Whence comes the power of human laws to bind?

Fishmonger From Paul's words: 'Obey them that have the rule over you.'¹⁶³

Butcher Then it follows from this that every regulation of bishops and magistrates is binding?

Fishmonger Provided it's fair, just, and legitimately made.

20 **Butcher** But who will be judge of that?

Fishmonger He who established it. For it's the prerogative of the lawmaker to interpret the law.¹⁶⁴

Butcher Therefore all regulations whatever, without distinction, must be obeyed?

25 **Fishmonger** In my opinion.

Butcher What if a foolish and unrighteous official¹⁶⁵ issues an unrighteous and unjust law? Will it have to stand because of his decision, and will the people – who have no legal right to decide on it – obey?

Fishmonger What's the good of dreaming of things that don't happen?

30 **Butcher** He who helps a parent, but wouldn't do so unless compelled by law, doesn't keep the law, does he?¹⁶⁶

Fishmonger I don't think he does.

Butcher How so?

35 **Fishmonger** In the first place, he doesn't satisfy the intent of the lawmaker; secondly, to a bad will he adds hypocrisy.

Butcher He who fasts, but wouldn't unless the church prescribed it, doesn't satisfy the law, does he?

Fishmonger You're changing both author and substance of the law.

40 **Butcher** Then compare the Jew, fasting on prescribed days in such fashion that unless compelled by law he would not fast, with the Christian keeping a fast appointed by men – a Christian who won't keep it if you repeal the law.

Or, if you prefer, the Jew abstaining from pork and the Christian abstaining from meat and milky foods on Friday.¹⁶⁷

Fishmonger Some failure to keep the law out of weakness is pardonable, I think, but deliberately opposing and murmuring against it is not.

5 **Butcher** But you admit that divine laws don't always bind on pain of hell-fire.

Fishmonger Why shouldn't I admit it?

Butcher You don't dare admit there's a human law which does not bind by that same penalty, but you leave mankind in doubt? Then you will seem to
10 attribute more to man's laws than to God's. Falsehood and slander are wrongs *per se* and forbidden by God; yet you admit there is some sort of falsehood and slander that does not make one liable to hell-fire, but you don't dare to free from hell-fire the man who in some manner or other eats meat on Friday.

Fishmonger It's not up to me to absolve or condemn anybody.

15 **Butcher** If divine and human laws are equally binding, then what's the difference between them?

Fishmonger Clearly that he who violates human law commits an offence *immediately* against man (if you permit me to use the fancy terms of the scholastics),¹⁶⁸ *mediately* against God; he who violates divine law does the
20 contrary.

Butcher What does it matter whether you mix vinegar or absinthe first, when I must drink both? Or what matter whether a stone glancing off me, after I'm hurt by it, strikes my friend or vice versa?

Fishmonger This is what I've learned.

25 **Butcher** And if the degree of obligation in both kinds of laws depends on their content and circumstances, what's the difference between God's authority and man's?

Fishmonger A wicked question!

Butcher Still, many people think there's a vast difference. God issued the
30 Law through Moses; it must not be violated. The same God proclaims laws through popes, or surely through a council. What's the difference between these laws and those? The law of Moses is given through a man; our laws through men. And what God proclaimed through one Moses appears to have less authority than what the Holy Spirit issues through a full council of
35 bishops and scholars.

Fishmonger It's not permissible to doubt concerning the inspiration of Moses.

Butcher Paul came in place of bishops. So what difference is there between Paul's precepts and those of any bishop?

40 **Fishmonger** That, beyond question, Paul wrote by the inspiration of the Spirit.

Butcher How far does this authority of writers extend?

Fishmonger Not beyond the apostles, I think, unless councils have inviolate authority.

Butcher Why isn't it permissible to doubt Paul's inspiration?

5 **Fishmonger** Because the consensus of the church forbids.

Butcher May one doubt concerning bishops?¹⁶⁹

Fishmonger They should not be suspected rashly, unless the circumstances themselves point clearly to filthy lucre or unrighteousness.

Butcher What about councils?¹⁷⁰

10 **Fishmonger** If they were duly convoked and conducted by the Holy Spirit, you may not doubt.

Butcher Is there any council, then, that lacks these qualifications?

Fishmonger Possibly. Otherwise theologians would not add this condition.

Butcher Then apparently it *is* possible to doubt concerning councils, too.

15 **Fishmonger** Not, I believe, after they have been accepted and approved by the judgment and consensus of Christian peoples.

Butcher Beyond the limits¹⁷¹ set by God's will to the sacrosanct and inviolable authority of the Scriptures, there is in my opinion another distinction also between divine and human laws.

20 **Fishmonger** What?

Butcher Divine laws are immutable unless they are of the kind that seem given for the purpose of signifying or coercing at a particular time – the kind that the prophets predicted would cease, in the earthly sense, and that according to apostolic teaching should now be given up.¹⁷² Furthermore,

25 among human laws there are sometimes wicked, foolish, and oppressive ones, on which account they are annulled either by higher authority or through general neglect by the public. Such is not the case with divine laws. Again, human law ceases of its own accord when the occasion for which it was made ends; as for example an ordinance requiring everyone to make

30 an annual contribution towards the building of a church: the force of the law ends when the church is completed. In addition, law made by man is not law unless it is acceptable to those who employ it. Divine law ought not to be judged, nor can it be abolished. Though even Moses took a vote before issuing a law, he didn't do this because he had to but in order to

35 render the people more obedient – since it is shameful to slight a law that you yourself voted for.¹⁷³ Finally, though human laws, which commonly prescribe corporal practices, are guides to godliness, they evidently come to an end when anyone has attained to such spiritual vigour as to need these restraints no longer¹⁷⁴ – provided he does his utmost to avoid shocking the
40 weak, not those who are overscrupulous out of malice. As if, for instance, a father should forbid a young daughter to drink wine, the better to protect

her virginity until marriage. When she's grown up and already given to a husband, she's no longer bound by her father's order. Many laws resemble drugs: indeed they're changed and yield to new circumstances with the approval of the physicians themselves, who would kill more people than they
5 cured if they always used the same remedies handed down by the ancients.

Fishmonger Well, you bring together many arguments, some of which I like, others I don't, and some I don't understand.

Butcher If a bishop's statute plainly savours of financial profit, that is, if in order to wring more money from them he requires every parish priest to
10 buy twice a year, for a gold ducat, the right of absolving in what are called reserved cases,¹⁷⁵ do you think it ought to be obeyed?

Fishmonger I do, but in the meantime there ought to be a protest – always short of rebellion – against the bad law. But how come you're my inquisitor, butcher? 'Let smiths mind their tools.'¹⁷⁶

Butcher At dinners we're often troubled by such questions. Sometimes the argument becomes so heated it ends in blows and bloodshed.

Fishmonger Let those who want to fight do so. I myself believe the laws of our forefathers ought to be reverently received and dutifully obeyed, as though they came from God. It is neither safe nor right to conceive or sow
20 harmful suspicion concerning public authority. And if there is some tyranny, but not enough to force us to wrongdoing, better to endure it than to oppose it seditiously.¹⁷⁷

Butcher I admit that will help those who hold powerful offices; and I feel as you do. I'm not jealous of them. But I'd like to hear how the liberty and
25 welfare of the people are to be provided for, too.

Fishmonger God will not desert his people.

Butcher But meanwhile where is that spiritual freedom¹⁷⁸ – which the apostles promise from the gospel, which Paul so often insists upon, proclaiming that 'the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,' and that we are
30 not children under a tutor, nor should we serve any longer the elements of this world;¹⁷⁹ and countless other things he says – if Christians are burdened with so many more regulations than Jews and if the laws of men bind more strictly than many of the precepts received from God?

Fishmonger I'll tell you, butcher. Christian freedom does not consist in
35 doing as one likes, unhampered by human regulations, but in fervour of spirit prepared for all things, doing readily and eagerly, as children rather than servants, what we are commanded to do.

Butcher A ready answer. But there were sons under the Mosaic law, too, and there are servants under the gospel – and that includes most men, I fear,
40 since those who do their duty because the law compels them are servants. So what's the difference between the New and the Old Law?

Fishmonger A great deal, in my opinion. What the Old Law taught under a veil,¹⁸⁰ the New Law placed before the eyes; what that foretold in riddles, this displayed more clearly; what that promised somewhat darkly, this for the most part displayed openly. That was handed down to one nation; this teaches salvation to all men alike. That imparted extraordinary spiritual grace to a few prophets and distinguished men; this poured out generously every kind of gift – of tongues, healing, prophecies, miracles – unto people of all ages, sexes, and nations.

Butcher Then where are these miracles nowadays?¹⁸¹

Fishmonger They have ceased (but not perished utterly), either because there is no need for them now that Christ's teaching is widespread, or because most of us, Christians in name only, lack faith, which is the maker of miracles.

Butcher If miracles are needed on account of unbelievers and infidels, the world is full of such men nowadays.

Fishmonger There is naïvely mistaken unbelief, such as that of the Jews who murmured against Peter for having received the family of Cornelius into the grace of the gospel;¹⁸² such as that of the gentiles who regarded whatever religion they had inherited from their ancestors as conferring salvation, and the teaching of the apostles as a foreign superstition. These men were converted by the miracles they beheld. Those who now are unbelievers in the gospel, when so great a light shines throughout the whole world, do not merely err but, blinded by sinful lusts, have 'left off to be wise, and to do good.'¹⁸³ No miracles would restore these men to a better mind. And now is the time for correction; afterwards will be a time for punishment.

Butcher Though you've said many things quite convincingly, still I'm resolved not to trust a salt fish seller, but I'll go to some exceptionally learned theologian; whatever he decides about each matter will serve as an oracle from heaven.

Fishmonger Who's that? Pharetrius?¹⁸⁴

Butcher A mere fool, and before his time, too – good for preaching to silly old women.

Fishmonger Bliteus?¹⁸⁵

Butcher Am I to believe such a chattering sophist?

Fishmonger Amphicolus?¹⁸⁶

Butcher I'll never trust him to answer questions. I trusted him – to my loss – with my meat. Could he solve problems honestly when he was not honest enough to pay his bill?

Fishmonger Lemantius?¹⁸⁷

Butcher I don't use blind men as guides.

Fishmonger Who, then?

Butcher Cephalus,¹⁸⁸ if you want to know; a man splendidly learned in the three languages and all *belles lettres*, besides having studied the Bible and ancient theologians long and deeply.

Fishmonger I'll give you better advice. Go to hell; there you'll find Master¹⁸⁹

- 5 Druin, who will remove all your difficulties with the double-edged Tenedian axe.¹⁹⁰

Butcher You go ahead to prepare the way for me.

Fishmonger But joking aside, are you telling the truth – that permission has been granted to eat meat?¹⁹¹

- 10 **Butcher** I was joking, to torment you. And if the Roman pontiff should want to do it ever so much, the salt fish sellers as a class would rise in rebellion. In the next place, the world is full of pharisaical men who can prove their holiness only by such trivial observances.¹⁹² They wouldn't stand for having that glory taken away from them now, nor would they allow their juniors to
15 have more liberty than they themselves had. It wouldn't even mean money in the butchers' pockets if the eating of anything whatever were permitted, for then our business would fluctuate; now our profit is more certain, with fewer risks and less work.

Fishmonger Very true, but the same inconvenience would come to us.

- 20 **Butcher** I'm glad we've finally found something a salt fish seller and a butcher can agree on. Now – to begin to speak seriously myself, too – just as I think it might be useful for Christian people to be bound by fewer minor regulations, especially if these contribute little or nothing to godliness (not to say hinder it), so am I unwilling to support those who reject all regulations
25 of all men and care not a straw for them.¹⁹³ More than that, they do many things just *because* they're forbidden to do them. – Still, I can't be astonished at the absurd judgments of men in a great many matters.

Fishmonger As for me, I can't marvel enough at them.

- Butcher** We turn the world upside down¹⁹⁴ if we suspect there's any danger
30 that the regulations and authority of the clergy may lose force, yet we pay no attention to the plainly evident danger of attributing so much to the authority of men that less is given to divine authority than is right. We steer so far wide of Scylla that we have no fear of Charybdis, a more deadly evil.¹⁹⁵ Who denies that honour is due to bishops, particularly if they do what their name
35 implies?¹⁹⁶ But it is impious to transfer to men the honour due to God alone, and, while we revere a man lavishly, revere God too little.¹⁹⁷ God is to be honoured in a fellow man, venerated in a fellow man; but all the same we must see to it that God is not defrauded, on this account, of the honour due him.

- Fishmonger** Similarly we see many persons trust so much in corporal rites
40 that, relying on these, they neglect what belongs to true godliness: arrogating to their own merits what comes of divine bounty, standing still where they

might have ascended to the more perfect, and slandering a neighbour on account of things neither good nor bad in themselves.¹⁹⁸

Butcher Indeed, when in the same affair there are two choices, one of which is better than the other, we always prefer the worse. The body, and what is
 5 of the body, are everywhere more esteemed than the things of the spirit. To have killed a man is considered a very serious crime – as it is; but to have destroyed a man’s mind with pestilential doctrine, with poisonous ideas, is sport. If a priest lets his hair grow long,¹⁹⁹ or wears a layman’s garb,²⁰⁰ he is thrown into jail and punished severely; if he boozes in a brothel, if he
 10 whores, if he dices, if he corrupts other men’s wives,²⁰¹ if he never touches a Bible, he is none the less a pillar of the church. I don’t excuse a change of costume, but I deprecate a preposterous judgment.

Fishmonger Nay, if he does not recite the Hours,²⁰² excommunication is at hand; if he lends money at interest²⁰³ or practises simony,²⁰⁴ he goes
 15 unpunished.²⁰⁵

Butcher If someone sees a Carthusian dressed in unorthodox fashion or eating meat, how he swears, how he shudders, how fearful is he lest the earth open wide and swallow both spectator and spectacle! Yet no one is similarly horrified to see the Carthusian drunk or ruining other people’s reputations
 20 by telling lies about them or openly cheating a poor neighbour.²⁰⁶

Fishmonger It’s as if one should see a Franciscan girded with an unknotted cord,²⁰⁷ or an Augustinian girded with wool instead of leather,²⁰⁸ or an ungirded Carmelite,²⁰⁹ or a girded Rhodian.²¹⁰ Again, if one should see a Franciscan wearing shoes,²¹¹ or a Crutched Friar half-shod,²¹² wouldn’t he
 25 stir up the Tyrian seas,²¹³ as the saying is?

Butcher What’s more, in our part of town recently, one of two women – both of whom you would have credited with common sense – had a miscarriage²¹⁴ and the other a fainting fit because they spied some prefect of canons, in charge of nuns, walking about in the immediate neighbourhood, but still in
 30 public, without a linen habit covered with a black cloak.²¹⁵ But these same women had often seen birds of that sort revelling, singing, dancing – I won’t say what else – and never felt upset at all.

Fishmonger Perhaps that should be overlooked on account of their sex. You know Polythrescus,²¹⁶ I dare say. He was dangerously ill – had consumption.
 35 The physicians tried long but in vain to get him to eat eggs and milky foods.²¹⁷ The bishop likewise urged him. Though not an uneducated man (he was a bachelor of divinity), Polythrescus seemed ready to die sooner than follow the advice of these doctors. So his physicians and friends decided to play a trick on him. They made a broth of eggs and goat’s milk and said
 40 it was almond milk. He ate it willingly, and doing the same for several days began to improve a little, until some servant-girl gave the secret away.

Thereupon he started to vomit what he had eaten. Yet that same man who was so superstitious about milk felt no scruples about welshing on a debt he owed me;²¹⁸ he had secretly torn up a promissory note that was openly acknowledged. He took an oath; I yielded to him. He was so casual about it
 5 that he seemed to wish to take such oaths every day. What could be more crooked than this course? He sinned against the judgment of the church in not obeying priest and physicians; and in a plain case of perjury he who was so delicate about milk had a good, strong conscience!

Butcher Here I'm reminded of a story told lately by a certain Dominican,
 10 when preaching before a crowded congregation, to temper the sadness of his sermon – for this happened on the Day of Preparation and he was preaching about our Lord's death.²¹⁹ A young man had taken advantage of a nun; her swollen belly was proof of the deed. An assembly of nuns was convoked, the abbess presiding. The nun was accused. No ground for *status inficialis*;
 15 the evidence was inescapable. She took refuge in the *status qualitatis* – or the *status translationis*, if you prefer. 'I was overcome by someone stronger.' 'But at least you could have screamed.' 'I would have done so,' says she, 'but there's a strict rule against making noise in the dormitory.'²²⁰ That's the story, anyway; only we must admit many things sillier that this are done.

20 Now I'll tell you something I saw with my own eyes; I won't give the name of the man and the place. I used to have a relative who was a prior, next in rank to an abbot,²²¹ in the Benedictine order, but he was one of those who don't eat meat except outside the place they call the great refectory.²²² He was thought to be learned and he himself wanted to be thought so. He was
 25 about fifty years old. Drinking bouts and carousings were daily occurrences with him. Every twelfth day he would go to the public baths to clear his kidneys.²²³

Fishmonger How could he afford that?

Butcher He had an income of six hundred florins a year.

30 **Fishmonger** Envious poverty!

Butcher From wine and lechery he became consumptive. When the doctors despaired of his life, the abbot ordered him to eat meat,²²⁴ adding that terrifying phrase, 'on penalty of disobedience.'²²⁵ On his deathbed he could scarcely be compelled to taste flesh – from which he had not shrunk for so
 35 many years.

Fishmonger A prior worthy of such an abbot! But I can guess the ones you're talking about, for I remember hearing the same story from others.

Butcher Guess.

Fishmonger Isn't the abbot a large, fat man with a lisp, and the prior a
 40 shorter man but straight and handsome?

Butcher You've guessed it.

Fishmonger Tit for tat.²²⁶ you'll hear what I myself saw recently. I was not only present but almost presided over it too. Two nuns were visiting relatives. When they reached their destination, it turned out that their servant had forgotten and left behind a prayer book according to the use of their
 5 order and community. Good Lord, what an uproar! They didn't dare dine unless Vespers were said,²²⁷ and they couldn't bear to say them from any other book than their own. Meanwhile the entire household went hungry. To make a long story short, the servant went back on the gelding; late in the evening he brings the missing book; prayers are said; and at ten o'clock
 10 we've hardly had dinner.

Butcher So far I hear nothing very awful.

Fishmonger Well, you've heard only half the story. During dinner these virgins began to feel jolly with wine,²²⁸ and finally when laughter broke out the party roared at jokes that were scarcely modest ones; nobody behaved
 15 more loosely than those two who refused to eat dinner unless prayers were said according to the use of their order. After dinner came games, dances,²²⁹ songs, and other things I don't dare mention; but I'm very much afraid what was done that night was hardly virginal, unless the preliminaries, the wanton games,²³⁰ nods, and kisses, deceived me.

Butcher I don't so much blame the nuns for that waywardness as I do the priests in charge of them.²³¹ But come; I'll match story with story. Nay, you shall hear rather a tale of something I saw with my own eyes.²³² Recently some persons were thrown into jail because they dared to bake bread on the Lord's day, though they may have needed it.²³³ Now I don't condemn the
 25 arrest but I reject the sentence.²³⁴ Some time later, on what is called Palm Sunday,²³⁵ it happened that I had to go to a neighbouring village. There, about four in the afternoon, I'm confronted by a spectacle I wouldn't know whether to call more pathetic or ridiculous; I do think no bacchanalian revels were more shameful. Some people were staggering about drunk, as a ship
 30 without a pilot is tossed by winds and waves. There were some who had their arms around another to keep him from falling, but they themselves were less than steady. Others fell down repeatedly and had a hard time getting up. Some were crowned with oak leaves.

Fishmonger Vine leaves would have been more appropriate; and they
 35 should have added the thyrsus.²³⁶

Butcher One old fellow, playing the part of Silenus,²³⁷ was carried aloft on their shoulders like a bundle, in the position corpses are sometimes borne – feet first – except that he was carried head down to prevent his choking with vomit, as would have happened had he had his head up. He was vomiting
 40 wretchedly on the legs and heels of the hindmost carriers. There wasn't a sober man among the bearers. Most were laughing, but in such a manner that

you'd say without hesitation they were crazy. The bacchic frenzy possessed them all.²³⁸ And in this procession they entered the city – in broad daylight, too.

Fishmonger Where had they caught that madness?

- 5 **Butcher** In a neighbouring village wine was sold a little cheaper than in town, so some pot-companions had gone there to be mad more cheaply but more copiously – for there was no less money spent but more folly bought. Had these men tasted an egg, they would have been clapped into jail as if for confessed parricides,²³⁹ though when (in addition to missing the sermon and neglecting Vespers) so much licence was publicly tolerated on such a
10 holy day,²⁴⁰ no one punished them, no one denounced them.

- Fishmonger** But – to save you from being so surprised at that – in the middle of town, in taverns next door to the church, on any holy day whatever, there is drinking, singing, dancing, brawling with so much tumult and
15 shouting that the service can't be finished or the sermon heard. If those same folk had stitched a shoe at that time, or tasted pork on a Friday, they'd be accused of a capital crime. And yet the Lord's day was appointed especially to afford people leisure to hear the gospel, and therefore stitching shoes was forbidden in order that people might have time to mend souls. Isn't this a
20 wonderful twisting of values?²⁴¹

- Butcher** Prodigious. Now, though in that very precept about fasting²⁴² there are two things, the one abstinence from food, the other selection of food,²⁴³ nobody is unaware that the first is a divine precept, or almost a divine precept, certainly. The other surely is not only a human one but in
25 fact almost conflicts with apostolic doctrine, however we explain it away. Nevertheless, here too, by a perverse judgment, to sup brings no punishment as a rule; to have tasted food forbidden by man but permitted by God and likewise by the apostles²⁴⁴ is a capital offence. Fasting, though we cannot establish beyond doubt that it was commanded by the apostles, is nonetheless
30 approved by their example and their letters. But that it is forbidden to eat the foods God created to be eaten thankfully²⁴⁵ – how many arguments we should need in defending *that* case before Paul as judge! And yet nobody is offended by the sumptuous dinners that are served all over the world; if a sick man nibbles some chicken,²⁴⁶ the Christian religion is in danger.
35 In England, during Lent, a regular supper is commonly prepared every other day.²⁴⁷ No one is surprised by this. If a person with fever ventures to touch chicken broth, that is regarded as a crime worse than sacrilege. Those people in Lent – a fast which, as there is none more ancient, so is there none esteemed more sacred by Christians – dine freely, as I've said. If you try
40 the same thing on a Friday *not* in Lent, they won't put up with it. If you ask why, their excuse is 'the custom of the country.'²⁴⁸ They detest the man who



The preacher

One of Hans Holbein the Younger's miniatures in his series of drawings for woodcuts published in *The Dance of Death* (Lyon 1538). As in all those woodcuts, Death lurks nearby. Except for the woman on the extreme left, who seems to be taking a nap, the listeners are attentive, though unaware of Death, who is mocking the preacher.



'Noise in church'

Woodcut illustrating Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (1494), section 44
From 'A Fish Diet' and many other Erasmian texts we learn that people who attended divine service included the devout, the conforming, and the reluctant. Some might bring their dogs or hawks along or chatter with friends, others leave the sermon to go home and drink or to play ball.

disregards national custom, yet excuse themselves for disregarding the most ancient custom of the universal church.

Fishmonger He who without reason neglects the custom of the country in which he lives is censurable.

5 **Butcher** I bring no charge against those who divide Lent between God and their belly, but I do charge them with absurd judgment about these subjects.

Fishmonger Though the Lord's day is declared to be ordained principally to allow people to meet at the same time for the purpose of hearing the gospel preached, whoever does not hear mass is accursed; whoever skips the
10 sermon, preferring to play ball, is pure.²⁴⁹

Butcher How great an outrage they think is committed if someone takes communion with unwashed mouth!²⁵⁰ How undisturbed they are when they do the same with a heart unclean and soiled by wilful lusts!

Fishmonger How many priests there are who would rather die than sacrifice
15 with a chalice and paten not yet consecrated by the bishop, or in everyday vestments! But among those who feel thus, how many we see who do not shrink from approaching the sacred meal still fuddled from last night's drunkenness! What horror if they accidentally touch the Lord's body²⁵¹ with a part of the hand that was not touched by holy oil! But are we equally
20 scrupulous about not offending God by a profane heart?

Butcher The sacred vessels we touch not, and if this does happen by chance, we think expiation is in order. And meantime how lightly do we violate the living temples of the Holy Spirit!²⁵²

Fishmonger Human ordinance forbids admission of a bastard, cripple,
25 or one-eyed man to holy orders.²⁵³ How obstinate we are in this, and yet meanwhile we everywhere accept ignoramuses, dicers, drunkards, soldiers, and murderers. They say, 'Diseases of character are hidden from us.' I'm not talking about hidden ones; I'm talking about those that are more open than bodily defects.

30 **Butcher** There are bishops, too, who assume no duties beyond those connected with business matters and other mean affairs.²⁵⁴ The office of preaching, which is the first duty of a bishop,²⁵⁵ they leave to others, however despicable – as they wouldn't do unless they were taken in by fallacious judgment.

35 **Fishmonger** Whoever violates a feast day²⁵⁶ ordained by a bishop is carried off to punishment. And yet some officials who boldly scorn as many regulations of popes and councils as they do excommunications, interfere with canonical elections, and destroy clerical immunities, not even sparing homes built by the charity of devout men for support of the aged, sick, and
40 needy, consider themselves fully Christian if they persecute those guilty of the slightest offences.

Butcher It's better to omit officials and talk about salt fish and meat.

Fishmonger All right, then, let's go back to fasting and fish.²⁵⁷ Papal laws, I've heard, specifically exempt young, old, sick, weak, those who do heavy work, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and those who are extremely poor.

5 **Butcher** I've often heard the same myself.

Fishmonger Again, I've heard that a certain outstanding theologian – his name is Gerson, I think – adds that if any reason exists as important as those for which papal laws make specific exemption, the rule likewise ceases to apply.²⁵⁸ Now there are special physical conditions that make fasting more
10 deadly than manifest disease, and there are some maladies or diseases that don't show themselves, though in fact they're the more dangerous. Hence one who knows his own condition has no need to consult a priest, just as little children don't consult a priest, because the law doesn't apply to them. And whoever forces youths, or very aged folk, or those who for any other
15 reason are weak, to fast or to eat fish sins twice: first, against brotherly love; second, against the intention of the popes, who don't want people to be bound by the law if obeying it endangers them. Whatever Christ ordained, he ordained for the health of body and mind. Nor does any pope arrogate so much power to himself that by his regulations he would force anyone
20 to risk his life; for example, if by evening fasting a man gets insomnia and the insomnia causes delirium,²⁵⁹ he is a self-murderer, contrary both to the intention of the church and to the will of God.

Princes, as often as suits them, threaten capital punishment when promulgating a law. What they are permitted to do, I don't define. This I
25 will say: they would do better if they inflicted the death penalty only for the reasons set forth in the Bible.²⁶⁰ In matters involving hatred the Lord calls upon us to stop far short of extremes, as from perjury, forbidding us to swear at all;²⁶¹ with respect to killing, forbidding us to be angry.²⁶² Because of a human ordinance we go to the extreme of killing; we term it
30 necessity! On the contrary, as often as a convincing reason appears, it is an act of charity to urge your neighbour on your own responsibility to do what his physical weakness demands. And if no reason appears, it is still an act of Christian charity to interpret kindly what may possibly be a sincere action, unless the person who eats shows himself openly scornful of the church.
35 A secular magistrate properly punishes those who eat contumaciously and seditiously; but what one eats at home for the sake of his health is the physicians' affair, not the magistrates'. And if the wickedness of some provokes public disturbance, let them be arrested for sedition,²⁶³ not the one who has looked out for his health without violating any law, divine or
40 human. Certainly we have no right to excuse ourselves by appealing to the authority of popes, whose humanity is so great that when they recognize the

case is no unreasonable one they readily urge a person to do what health demands and protect him by briefs against the slanders of the wicked.

Finally, throughout the whole of Italy meat may be sold in certain butcher shops for the health of those whom the law does not restrict.²⁶⁴

- 5 What's more, I've even heard the somewhat less pharisaical divines say in sermons, 'Don't hesitate at mealtime to take a loaf and a measure²⁶⁵ of wine or beer out of regard for bodily weakness.' If they assume so much authority as to permit the strong a light supper in place of a regular meal – and that contrary to the precept of the church, which decreed a fast, not a light
10 supper – why don't they allow a full meal to those whose infirmity requires it, since the popes, for reasons stated, have signified their consent? If some person disciplines his body too harshly, it may be called zeal, for everybody knows his own condition. But where is the piety, where the charity of those who, against the law of nature, against the law of God, against the sense of
15 pontifical law, drive a weak brother, lively in spirit but infirm in body, to death or to a disease more pitiless than death?

- Butcher** Your recital has reminded me of something I saw two years ago.²⁶⁶ You know Eros,²⁶⁷ now an old man in his sixties, of more than fragile health, and daily illnesses besides,²⁶⁸ and so beset by the most troublesome and
20 toilsome studies that they could break even a Milo.²⁶⁹ In addition, through some obscure quirk of nature, he has been from very boyhood so averse to eating fish and so incapable of fasting that he has never attempted it without danger to his life.²⁷⁰ Eventually, he was amply protected from pharisaical tongues by papal briefs.²⁷¹ Recently, on invitation from friends, he had
25 visited the city of Eleutheropolis, a place not altogether corresponding to its name.²⁷² This was during Lent. One or two days were devoted to the whims of his friends. Meanwhile, in order to avoid giving offence to anybody, he was eating fish, although he had (if it were needed) a papal brief permitting him to eat whatever he liked. Already he felt his sickness coming upon
30 him – an old acquaintance, but more cruel than death.²⁷³ He made ready to leave, and it was urgent to do so unless he wanted to take to his bed there. Suspecting he was leaving earlier because he couldn't bear eating fish,²⁷⁴ certain persons arranged for Glaucoplutus,²⁷⁵ a man of vast learning and of high authority in that community, to invite Eros to his house for breakfast.
35 Tired by now of the crowd he had been unable to avoid at an inn, Eros accepted, but on condition that nothing be provided except a couple of eggs; when he had eaten them, standing up, he would mount his horse and depart. This was promised. When he arrived, there was a chicken ready.²⁷⁶ Annoyed, Eros touched nothing but the two eggs,²⁷⁷ and breaking away from the party
40 took horse, accompanied by some scholarly friends. Somehow the smell of this chicken had reached the slanderers. By these a rumour was spread as

horrible as if ten men had been poisoned. Nor did only that city ring with the story, but almost simultaneously it flew to other cities three days distant. And as usual, report had added something to truth: that unless Eros had fled quickly, he would have been arrested and brought before a magistrate. As
 5 this was completely false, so it was true that Glaucoplutus had to satisfy a magistrate who demanded an explanation.²⁷⁸ Eros, as I've said, was already in such a condition that even if he ate meat in public, who would have reason to be offended? And yet in that same city all during Lent, but especially on holy days, there is drinking to the point of delirium, uproar, dancing,
 10 brawling, dice-playing next door to the church, so that the sermon can't be heard²⁷⁹ – and no one is upset in the least.

Fishmonger A wonderful perversity of judgment.

Butcher Here's a similar story.²⁸⁰ Nearly two years ago that same Eros went on a visit to Ferventia for the sake of his health; I went along as his
 15 companion. He stopped at the home of an old friend – a very important man and leading churchman – who had invited him by frequent letters. When it came to fish, Eros again began to be in serious trouble. A whole array of illnesses came upon him: fever, headache, vomiting, the stone. The host, though he saw his friend was in serious danger, nevertheless didn't
 20 dare give him a bit of meat. Why not? He recognized that there were many reasons why it was permitted, he knew about the brief – but he feared men's tongues. And already the sickness had progressed to the point where giving meat would have been useless.

Fishmonger What did Eros do? I know the man's nature. He would die
 25 sooner than bring his friend into any ill repute.

Butcher He shut himself up in his room and for three days ate as he usually did: his lunch was a single egg, his drink water boiled with sugar.²⁸¹ The moment his fever subsided he mounted his horse, taking his provisions with him.

30 **Fishmonger** What were they?

Butcher Almond milk in a bottle and raisins in his purse.²⁸² When he reached home, the stone made itself evident and he was in bed a whole month. And yet a cruel but groundless rumour of his eating meat followed this departure, too, and spread as far as Paris, often accompanied by glaring
 35 lies. What do you consider an appropriate treatment for those who spread such scandal?

Fishmonger That everybody empty their chamber-pots on those creatures' heads, and if they happen to meet them, hold their noses while passing, so they'll recognize their own folly.

40 **Butcher** Surely this pharisaical wickedness deserved to be severely punished by denunciations of divines. Now what do you think of that host?

Fishmonger He strikes me as a prudent man who knew what slight reasons people have sometimes for raising great commotions.

Butcher Let's grant that what he did was prudential and interpret the good man's timidity kindly. But how many there are who, though on such an
 5 occasion they would permit a brother to perish, pretend their reason is the custom of the church and public scandal!²⁸³ Yet in their own openly scandalous life how they behave in feastings, in love affairs, in gluttony, in sloth, in supreme contempt for sacred studies, in thefts, simony, and frauds, not caring a rap for public scandal!

10 **Fishmonger** There are some just like that. What they call piety is terrible and wicked cruelty. But still more cruel, I think, are those – especially the ones acting without public authorization – who do not merely leave a man in danger at times but devise dangers, as though setting traps, and bring many into manifest peril of body and soul.

15 **Butcher** I'm waiting for you to continue.

Fishmonger Thirty years ago I lived in Paris²⁸⁴ in a college named from vinegar.²⁸⁵

Butcher I hear a word of wisdom. What's that you say? A salt fish seller in a college so sour? No wonder, then, if he's so full of theological controversies.

20 For, as I hear, the very walls there lean towards theology.

Fishmonger It's as you say, yet so far as I'm concerned I carried nothing away from there except a body plagued by the worst humours, plus a most generous supply of lice.²⁸⁶ – But to continue what I began. That college was then ruled by Jan Standonck,²⁸⁷ a man whose intentions were beyond

25 reproach but whom you would have found entirely lacking in judgment. Because he remembered his own youth, which had been spent in bitter poverty, he took special account of impoverished students. For that he deserves much credit. And had he relieved the poverty of young men enough to provide a decent support for honest studies, while making sure

30 they did not have too soft a life, he would have merited praise. But this he tried to do by means of bedding so hard, diet so harsh and scanty, by sleepless nights and labours so burdensome, that within a year his initial effort had caused the deaths of many very capable, gifted, promising youths and brought others (some of whom I myself knew) to blindness, nervous

35 breakdowns, or leprosy. Not a single student in fact was out of danger.

Who would deny that this was cruelty to a fellow human? Not content with these measures, he added cloak and cowl; and he deprived them of meat entirely. And tender shoots of this sort he consigned to distant regions.²⁸⁸

40 But if everyone were to give way to their enthusiasms to the extent he did, creatures like these would fill the whole world, since from such beginnings came the monasteries, which are now a threat to popes and kings. To rejoice

in the gain of bringing a fellow man to godliness is right; to seek glory in clothing or food is pharisaical. To relieve our neighbours' need is a duty; to watch lest they take advantage of good people's generosity and become dissolute is a lesson learned. But to drive a brother to disease, to madness, to death by these things is cruelty – parricide. The desire to murder is missing, perhaps, but the killing is there. What pardon do these men deserve, then? Surely that deserved by the doctor who by his extraordinary incompetence kills the patient.

Someone will say, 'Nobody forces them to follow this mode of life; they come voluntarily, seek admission, and are free to leave if tired of it.' Scythian reply!²⁸⁹ And so they require young men to see more clearly what is best for them than a man advanced in learning, experience, and age can do? One might just as well make the same excuse to a starving wolf caught in a trap.²⁹⁰ Or will a person who serves unwholesome or even deadly food to one who is famished thus excuse himself to the dying man: 'Nobody forced you to eat; you gobbled up of your own free will what was set before you.' Wouldn't the other be justified in retorting, 'You gave me poison, not food'? Need is a powerful weapon,²⁹¹ hunger a great torment.²⁹² Away, then, with those fine words, 'You had free choice.' On the contrary, whoever uses such torments brings heavy pressure to bear. Nor has this harshness killed only poor youths; it has destroyed not a few sons of rich men and utterly ruined superior talent. To restrain licentious youth by counsels of moderation is a paternal office. But in the cold of midwinter those who ask for food are given a bit of bread; they are told to drink from a well that is pestilential or is dangerous, even if it has only the chill of the early morning.

I know many who even today can't shake off the illness contracted there. On the ground floor were cubicles with rotten plaster, near stinking latrines.²⁹³ No one ever lived in these without either dying or getting a terrible disease. I omit for the present the astonishingly savage floggings,²⁹⁴ even of the innocent. Thus, they declare, is 'wildness' tamed – 'wildness' being their name for unusual talent, which they zealously destroy, to render men more fit for monasteries. How many rotten eggs used to be eaten there!²⁹⁵ How much bad wine drunk! Perhaps these conditions have been corrected; but too late, obviously, for those who have died or who carry a diseased body about. Nor, I assure you, do I mention these matters because I wish that college any bad luck; but I've judged it worth while to warn against human cruelty corrupting inexperienced and tender youth under the guise of religion. How much politeness or true religion is learned there nowadays I don't, at the moment, inquire. But if I saw that everyone who put on a cowl put off his sinfulness, I'd urge everybody to don a cowl. Nowadays the case is altered; consequently youthful spirits should not be broken to this

sort of life, but instead the heart should be trained to godliness. Scarcely ever has it been my lot to visit a Carthusian monastery without running into one or two there who were either plain silly or raving mad.²⁹⁶ – But it's high time for us to return to the subject after such a long digression.

5 **Butcher** Oh, no, we haven't lost time by digression. We've been discussing the very same subject, unless perhaps something occurs to you that you think should be added to what has been said about human regulations.

Fishmonger To me, at least, whoever neglects to carry out the lawgiver's intention fails to fulfil a human ordinance.²⁹⁷ For he who on holy days abstains
10 only from labour, and yet hasn't time to go to church or hear sermons, violates the holy day by disregarding the purpose for which the day was instituted. Worthy work was forbidden that there might be something better. Now surely he who instead of doing his usual work devotes his leisure to taverns, whores, drunkenness, brawls, and dice violates the holy day twice.²⁹⁸

15 **Butcher** I believe, too, that a fixed number of holy prayers is assigned to monks and nuns in order that by this exercise they may grow accustomed to lifting their hearts to God; yet whoever does not complete this number runs a risk. Whoever merely murmurs the words with his mouth, not troubling to concentrate on what he utters, nay, not even applying himself to learn
20 grammar – without which what he utters is unintelligible – is reputed a good man and considers himself one, too.

Fishmonger I know many priests who think it an inexpressible sacrilege to have omitted any part of the prayers or to have mistakenly named the Blessed Virgin when they should have named St Paul.²⁹⁹ But these same
25 priests would think nothing of dice, whoring, and drunkenness, which are forbidden by divine and human laws alike.

Butcher I've found not a few who would rather have been killed than say mass after accidentally tasting food or swallowing some drops of water while rinsing their mouths. But these same priests would confess to holding
30 grudges against certain men whom they'd kill if they had the chance; and they didn't shrink from approaching the Lord's table in this frame of mind.³⁰⁰

Fishmonger Yet to sacrifice fasting is man's precept; to lay aside wrath before approaching the sacred table is God's precept.³⁰¹

Butcher How absurdly, moreover, do we pass judgment on perjury!³⁰²
35 One who has sworn he would discharge a debt is considered disgraced if convicted of non-payment.³⁰³ A priest who openly lives in sin, when he has publicly professed chastity, is not charged with perjury.³⁰⁴

Fishmonger Why don't you sing that song to bishops' vicars,³⁰⁵ who swear before the altar that all whom they present for holy orders they have found
40 to be of suitable age, knowledge, and morals, when sometimes scarcely two or three in the lot are passable, many hardly fit for a plough handle?³⁰⁶

Butcher Whoever swears falsely,³⁰⁷ whatever the reason, is cited for punishment; yet those who perjure themselves in every third word go unpunished.

Fishmonger They don't swear seriously.

- 5 **Butcher** You could plead the same specious excuse³⁰⁸ for the person who kills a man 'not seriously.' Perjury is permissible neither in jest nor in earnest. And killing a man as a joke would be a more terrible crime³⁰⁹ than killing him in a burst of anger.

- Fishmonger** What if one weighed in these same scales the oaths of princes
10 when they take office?³¹⁰

Butcher Though those may be very serious, they are nevertheless imposed by custom and hence are not considered perjuries. There's the same complaint concerning vows. The marriage vow is unquestionably of divine ordinance, and yet it is broken by taking monastic vows – a human invention.³¹¹

- 15 **Fishmonger** Though no vow is more sacred than that of baptism, yet he who changes his robe or place is sought, seized, bound as if he had poisoned his father, and sometimes is killed for the honour of the order.³¹² But those whose whole life is completely contrary³¹³ to the vow of baptism,³¹⁴ since they are wholly given over to the service of mammon, their belly, and the
20 vanities of this world, are esteemed; they're not accused of the crime of breaking their vow, or condemned, or called apostates,³¹⁵ but are considered Christians.³¹⁶

- Butcher** Popular opinion is much the same with regard to good and evil deeds and the pursuit of happiness. How much disgrace dogs a girl who
25 has fallen from virtue! But to have a lying and disparaging tongue, and a heart corrupted by hatred and envy, is a far more serious fault. Where is a theft, however slight, not punished more severely than adultery? No one willingly keeps company with a person once soiled by thievery; but it's a fine thing to be on good terms with one who's involved in
30 adultery.³¹⁷ No one would think it proper to bestow his daughter on the public executioner, who carries out the law for a salary, just as the judge himself does, and yet we do not abhor a marriage with a soldier, who so often – against his parents' wishes and sometimes against the law³¹⁸ – has taken himself off to a mercenary war and is defiled by many whorings,
35 robberies, sacrileges, murders, and other crimes commonly committed in the army or in marching to and from war.³¹⁹ Him we accept as a son-in-law; him, a man worse than a hangman anywhere, the maiden dotes on. And we even recognize aristocratic rank achieved through some wrongdoing. Whoever steals coin, hangs; those who rob ever so many by graft, monopolies,
40 usury, and a thousand tricks and frauds are esteemed among leading citizens.

Fishmonger Those who give poison to someone pay the penalty as poisoners; whoever injure the public with bad wine or spoiled butter get off without punishment.³²⁰

5 **Butcher** I know some monks so superstitious that they think themselves in the devil's power if perchance they are without their sacred habit. Yet they don't fear the devil's claws if they lie, slander, get drunk, bear envy.³²¹

Fishmonger You may see many simple souls of that sort among us, too. They don't believe the house is safe from the violence of an evil spirit unless they have holy water,³²² sacred chaplets,³²³ and taper at hand, and yet aren't
10 afraid for their own temples,³²⁴ in which God is daily mocked and the devil honoured in so many ways.

Butcher How many there are who put their trust in the Virgin Mother's protection, or Christopher's, rather than that of Christ himself! They worship the Mother with images, candles, and canticles; Christ they offend recklessly
15 by their wicked life. When a sailor's in danger, he calls on Christ's mother or Christopher or some other saint sooner than Christ himself.³²⁵ And they think the Virgin will help them because at nightfall they sing a hymn they don't understand, *Salve regina*,³²⁶ and they don't fear instead that she may deem herself mocked by such hymns when they spend the whole day and a
20 large part of the night in smutty talk, drinking, and doings unmentionable.

Fishmonger So a soldier in danger thinks of George or Barbara³²⁷ rather than Christ. Moreover, though no veneration pleases the saints more than imitation of their deeds, by which they themselves pleased Christ, we boldly scorn this office. And we believe Antony will be extremely good to us if we keep some
25 sacred swine for him, and if we have him painted with his pig, fire, and little bell on the doors and sides of houses.³²⁸ We don't fear what ought to be feared more – that he may wish ill to houses where flourish those same vices the holy man always hated. We count out short rosaries and Hail Marys to the Virgin; why don't we rather count for her sake a puffed-up mind brought
30 under subjection, lust curbed, injury forgiven? Christ's mother is pleased by hymns of this kind, and by these works you would deserve well of both.

Butcher In like manner one who is dangerously ill thinks of St Roche³²⁹ or St Denis³³⁰ rather than Christ, the sole salvation of mankind. Not only that, but those who expound Sacred Scripture from the pulpit, which nobody
35 can understand properly or teach profitably without the inspiration of the Spirit,³³¹ prefer to invoke the assistance of the Virgin Mother rather than Christ himself or the spirit of Christ. And he who dares to murmur against this practice, which they call praiseworthy, is himself called into suspicion of heresy. But far more praiseworthy was the custom of the ancients, kept by
40 Origen, Basil, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine,³³² who repeatedly invoke the spirit of Christ, never begging the Virgin's assistance.

Nor are they indignant with those who have dared to change a custom so sacred, one derived both from the teaching of Christ and the apostles and from the example of the holy Fathers.³³³

Fishmonger An error of the same kind is common to many monks, who
 5 persuade themselves that Benedict is well disposed as long as they wear his cowl and cloak, though I don't think he had ever worn a garment so full of folds and so expensive. They don't fear his indignation because their manner of living has nothing in common with his.

Butcher He who does not abandon the ash-grey robe and hempen girdle is
 10 brother to Francis. Compare their lives: nothing is more of a contrast (I speak of most, not all). And this remark can be applied to all forms of orders and professions. From false judgment comes an absurd assurance; and from the same source absurd scandals. Let a Franciscan go out girded with a leather belt, having accidentally lost his rope cord; or an Augustinian wearing a
 15 woolen girdle; or one ungirded who is usually girded – what horror will there be! How great the danger that women may miscarry at the sight!³³⁴ And from suchlike trifles, how great a breach of brotherly love! What bitter hatred! What venomous slanders! Against these the Lord exclaims in the Gospel; no less forcefully the apostle Paul.³³⁵ Against these same things
 20 should theologians and preachers exclaim.

Fishmonger Of course they should; but among them are many who find it to their advantage for the common people, yes even kings and bishops, to be like that. Again, there are those who in these matters are no wiser than the people; or if they are, they hide the fact, mindful of their bellies rather
 25 than of Jesus Christ. And so it happens that everywhere the people, misled by preposterous judgments, are confident when a clear and present danger exists, anxious when there is no danger; they relax when they ought to push on, advance when they ought to withdraw. If you attempt to remove any of these misconceptions, you hear 'treason!' – as though it were treason for a
 30 man to try to cure by better medicines some disease long encouraged by an ignorant physician and made almost natural.

But we must stop complaining; there's no end to it. And if people learned of this conversation of ours, there'd be danger of their bringing out a new proverb about how a salt fish seller and a butcher meddle in these
 35 matters.

Butcher I'll retaliate with an old proverb: 'Even a kitchen gardener often talks sense.'³³⁶ When I was discussing these topics at dinner recently, a beggarly, lousy, sallow, shrivelled, dried-up, ghastly fellow was present, unluckily. He had scarcely three hairs on his head; whenever he spoke he
 40 shut his eyes; they said he was a theologian.³³⁷ He called me a disciple of Antichrist³³⁸ and mumbled a good deal else.

Fishmonger And you? Did you keep quiet?

Butcher I wished him a bit of sense in such a withered brain – if he even had a brain.

Fishmonger I'd be happy to hear this story from beginning to end.

5 **Butcher** You'll hear it if you come to lunch on Thursday. You'll have veal, ground and baked in a pie, and so tender you could suck it.

Fishmonger I accept on condition that you'll have lunch with me on Friday. I'll try to convince you that salt fish sellers don't always eat rotten salt fish.

NOTES

- 1 Cf Plautus *Pseudolus* 86–9.
- 2 Catastrophic, fatal; recalling a famous disaster in Spain during the second Punic war. See Cicero *Philippics* 5.10.27 and *Adagia* I ix 67.
- 3 Of Pythia, priestess of the shrine of Apollo at Delphi; therefore authoritative though not always clear
- 4 Thus in *De copia* LB I 17D / CWE 24 332:22–3; *De civilitate* LB I 1034C / CWE 25 274; *Adagia* II iv 8. These texts single out dealers in salt fish and meat as the most common examples of such habits, but the fault was a mark of other persons of mean birth or breeding too. See *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.54.67 ed and trans Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library (London and Cambridge, Mass 1954) 402 note b.
- 5 An ironical reversal of the adage that 'among the blind the one-eyed man is king' (*Adagia* III iv 90)
- 6 *Adagia* I x 90
- 7 Salimbene says that once in Reggio fishmongers' prices were so high that the town council forbade them to sell fish during Lent. Another time the citizens threatened butchers with the same treatment (*Chronicle* trans G.G. Coulton in *From St Francis to Dante* [rev ed London 1907; repr Philadelphia 1972] 224–5).
- 8 Writing in December 1524, perhaps close to the date when he wrote this colloquy, Erasmus recalls outbreaks of the sweating sickness in England and wonders if the fondness of the English for salt fish might have something to do with this. The English would be better off in any event if they ate more moderately (Ep 1532 passim). Salt fish could easily cause sickness if kept too long. River fish were less common as food (H. Brabant 'Erasme, ses maladies et ses médecins' in *Colloquia Erasmiiana Turonensia* I 550).
- 9 Famous Greek physician (fifth–fourth centuries BC) and author of many works on medicine
- 10 Some towns and cities had ordinances forbidding shambles, where cattle were slaughtered, within the city walls. London, by an enactment of government in 1488–9, is one example. On London butchers in Erasmus' time and later see Philip E. Jones *The Butchers of London* (London 1983). More's Utopians had strict rules about such matters. No filthy or diseased meat, even if slaughtered outside the walls, could be brought in (Yale CWM 4 138, 139, 418).

- 11 Some fishmongers pretend that the fish they sell are fresh when in fact they have been dead for two days (*Adagia* iv i 74). The Collegium Trilingue in Louvain, in which Erasmus took so strong an interest, was near a fish market – a reason for some students in the university to disdain the new college, though Erasmus calls the site *honestus* (Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 194; Allen Ep 1221:18).
- 12 Literally ‘would not sleep.’ Cf Juvenal 2.37.
- 13 An ancient complaint; cf Athenaeus 6.225. For a contemporary one see *A Fifteenth Century School Book* ed William Nelson (Oxford 1956) 4 no 10, 8 no 30.
- 14 Both are poisonous. On hemlock see *Parabolae* LB I 565F / CWE 146:12; on wolfsbane ‘The Godly Feast’ 181:7–9. Both are mentioned in ‘Sympathy’ 1044:17–18, 27–8.
- 15 Electric ray fish, as at *Convivium religiosum* ‘The Godly Feast’ 181:41
- 16 *hydrum*. Erasmus tells an anecdote about it in *Adagia* III x 99.
- 17 *lepus marinum*, a fish fatal to him who tastes it; and to be touched by man is fatal to the fish. *Adagia* II i 15; *Parabolae* LB I 603B / CWE 23 231:33; ‘Sympathy’ 1040:38–9.
- 18 Spring, including Lent
- 19 *Adagia* III vii 26
- 20 See *Adagia* II iv 72 on *betizare* ‘to behave stupidly.’ In ‘Patterns’ (12:1–2) Erasmus makes fun of Noël Béda by punning on this name and *beta* ‘beet.’
- 21 Cf ‘The Profane Feast’ n87.
- 22 In antiquity, says Erasmus in a passage added to the revised edition of his *Encomium medicinae*, laws fostered public health and physicians were responsible for carrying out measures to that end. Nowadays governments, to their shame, neglect this duty (LB I 542F–543A / ASD I-4 182:330–42 / CWE 29 46–7). As for venerating general customs, see ‘The Profane Feast’ n58.
- 23 Popes and bishops, who have authority to excommunicate
- 24 Since the fishmonger once lived in a college in Paris (715:16–17 below), he may be French; but whether French, Dutch, or German he could easily have read the Bible in his native language. Versions in those and some other native tongues were in print before 1500, but not in English, as a consequence of the prohibition of the Lollard Bible. The first printed New Testament in English, translated by William Tyndale, did not appear until 1525–6 (the 1525 Cologne printing was incomplete; the Worms 1526 was the first complete version). The fourteenth-century Wycliffite version, denounced and suppressed by authority, survived and circulated surreptitiously in manuscript copies. On vernacular Bibles in various languages see CHB II and Bruce M. Metzger *The Early Versions of the New Testament* (Oxford 1977). Erasmus’ concern for the availability and use of Scripture in vernacular tongues by the laity is often recorded. The case for translation, especially of the New Testament, is made most eloquently in *Paraclesis*, his preface to his Greek New Testament of 1516 (LB VI *3 recto–4 verso / Holborn 139–49; translation in John C. Olin *Christian Humanism and the Reformation* rev ed [New York 1976] 92–106) and in the longer preface to the Paraphrase on Matthew (1522), addressed to the ‘devout reader’ (LB VII **2 verso–4 verso). See Craig R. Thompson ‘Scripture for the Ploughboy and Some Others’ in *Studies in the Continental Background of English Renaissance Literature* ed Dale B.J. Randall and George Walton Williams (Durham, NC 1977) 3–28 and ‘Jerome and the Testimony of Erasmus in Disputes over the

Vernacular Bible' *Proceedings of the PMR Conference* (Augustinian Historical Institute, Villanova University, Villanova, Pa) 6 (1981) 1–36.

- 25 This paragraph reflects classical as well as biblical tradition (Genesis). It brings to mind Ovid's description of the Golden Age (*Metamorphoses* 1.89–112) and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, especially book 4.
- 26 Genesis 2:8–9, 15–17
- 27 In the early church many Christians believed, on the basis of received preaching of the gospel and inferences from recent events, that the Last Judgment was near at hand. So the author of 1 John 2:18, for example, affirmed near the end of the first century of our era. One of the best-known patristic expositions of its nature is Augustine's *De civitate Dei* 20–1. The idea and even expectation of it became fixed in the Christian consciousness. In Erasmus' time the famous *Nürnberg Chronicle* concluded with a reference to the approaching end of the world.
The butcher's comment was perfectly conventional and intelligible to Erasmus' readers; cf a similar remark in *Antibarbari* (LB X 1696C–D / ASD I-1 48:17–20 / CWE 23 26:15–18). Calvin observed that the present world is drawing to a close even before completing its six thousandth year (ICR 1.14.1). Christian theologians could not accept Aristotle's doctrine of the eternity of the world. The notion of gradual decay in the physical universe, accompanied by moral and social corruption in mankind, received due attention from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers. Godfrey Goodman's *The fall of man* (1616; STC 12023) and George Hakewille's *An apologie or declaration of the power and providence of God* (1627; STC 12611) were representative statements; see Victor Harris *All Coherence Gone* (Chicago 1949).
- 28 After the Flood 'every moving thing that liveth' could be eaten except 'with the life thereof,' that is, its blood (Gen 9:3–4; cf Lev 11:9–12). This exception was the consequence of Cain's murder of Abel (Gen 4:10–11). Blood, identified with 'life' or soul, was sacred (Deut 12:23). Hence the butcher is wrong in saying that this prohibition was for the sake of humanity, not sanctity.
- 29 The butcher appears to be wrong here too. Of creatures living in water, 'all that have fins and scales shall ye eat,' but those that do not are forbidden (Deut 14:9–10; Lev 11:11–12).
- 30 *ariolus*; Cf *Adagia* III v 25.
- 31 Gen 1:28
- 32 Alluding to the story of Arion. See 'Sympathy' 1038:22–3 and n22.
- 33 Cf *Parabolae* CWE 23 219:13–14, from Pliny *Naturalis historia* 18.361. On the *echinus* see also 'The Profane Feast' n33.
- 34 Gen 1:29
- 35 See n28 above. The Mosaic legislation contained elaborate rules about 'clean' and 'unclean' foods (Leviticus 11 and Deut 14:3–21).
- 36 Cf 'The Profane Feast' 143:34–6.
- 37 Cf Galatians 4, and see also 'Faith' 425:6–19.
- 38 Gen 9:15–16. The covenant with Noah was repeated to Abraham and successive patriarchs and through them to all Israel.
- 39 Matt 5:17; see n42 below.
- 40 Cf John 1:17; Gal 3:24–5.
- 41 1 Cor 7:18; Acts 15:5–11

- 42 The Decalogue or Ten Commandments and the corpus of Hebrew laws revealed to Moses and codified in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. These latter regulations governing most practices and duties pertaining to religion, morals, and equity are what Erasmus sums up as 'Judaism,' a fundamental theme in the discussion that follows. The Ten Commandments were binding on all Christians as well as Jews (Mark 12:29–31), but Jesus modified or reinterpreted much of the Law, proclaiming that he had not come to abolish the Law and the prophets but to fulfil them (Matt 5:17, 21–22, 27–8): 'Ye have heard it said . . . but I say unto you.' Chapters 5–7 of Matthew are the essence of the gospel, and Erasmus' Paraphrases on them (LB VII) the key to his expositions of the difference between Law and gospel. His paraphrase on Gal 5:2 leaves no room for compromise: 'You must be clearly Jews and give up Christ or clearly Christians and reject Judaism' (LB VII 961B / CWE 42 121).
- 43 For example Isa 42:1–4, 49:1–6, 50:4–9, 52:13–53:12; Jer 31:31–4 as these passages were traditionally interpreted
- 44 Pss 40:6 (39:7 Vulg), 51:16 (50:18 Vulg); Hos 6:6; Jer 6:20; Isa 1:13–14; Deut 30:6
- 45 Matt 26:28; Mark 14:24; 1 Cor 11:25
- 46 Jewish] This word, omitted in earlier editions, was added in the March 1529 edition, but as Erasmus told his Paris critics, the meaning was clear anyway, as fair-minded readers would have known (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 950A–B).
- The relation of Law to gospel with regard to distinction of foods is treated in 'The Godly Feast' 188:8–41, 189:35–191:37. The law of Moses prescribed right and defined wrong, but its accompanying requirements and burden of ceremonies were superseded by the spirituality of the Gospels and the doctrine of the Incarnation. Such at any rate was the absolute conviction of Erasmus and his insistent message in his religious writings from first to last, from *Enchiridion* to *Ecclesiastes*. Contrast between the letter and spirit of the law, whether Mosaic or modern, secular or canonical, is fundamental in his Christianity. See an emphatic passage on those differences in *Ecclesiastes* LB V 790A–E, one of very numerous examples, and the paraphrase on Galatians 5. Allusions to 'Judaism' as the Old Law occur in many colloquies.
- 47 Matt 15:10–11
- 48 Peter's vision is described in Acts 10:9–29. On his later inconsistency and Paul's rebuke see Gal 2:11–21.
- 49 Throughout Galatians and 1 Corinthians; Col 2:16–17; 1 Tim 4:3; Titus 1:15
- 50 1 Cor 3:2; Heb 5:12–14
- 51 Gal 3:23–9
- 52 Heb 10:1
- 53 Forbidden to Jews; Lev 11:7–8. See n35 above.
- 54 Exod 20:13; Lev 11:7
- 55 1 Sam 21:3–6, and cf Matt 12:3–4, Mark 2:25–6, Luke 6:3–4; for the sacred bread Exod 29:32–3 and Lev 24:5–9
- 56 See in the Apocrypha 2 Maccabees 6:12–7:42 and 4 Maccabees chapters 5 to 16. The book of 4 Maccabees was once attributed to Josephus. Erasmus contributed a preface (Ep 842) and perhaps revision of a Latin translation of it (Cologne 1517 or 1518).

- 57 Matt 11:30; Acts 15:10. Erasmus' long note on Matt 11:30 in his *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* uses many of the same arguments on Mosaic law versus Christian liberty found in this colloquy (LB VI 63B–65D).
- 58 Acts 15:1–35
- 59 *Ecclesiastes* LB V 830E–F. On the meaning of baptism see 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' nn27, 57; 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n11. On the ceremony see 'The Godly Feast' 196:13–19 and the notes.
- 60 Gen 17:10–12; Lev 12:3; Luke 2:21
- 61 For methods of baptizing see 'The Godly Feast' n227.
- 62 The fishmonger and butcher know well enough that this doctrine was commonly held, but they do not discuss it, passing it by with 'So they say.' Their words allude to a famous theological deduction enunciated and emphasized by St Augustine. The doctrine was based on his interpretation of Rom 5:12. The Vulgate text of that verse reads: *Propterea sicut per unum hominem peccatum in hunc mundum intravit, et per peccatum mors; et ita in omnes homines mors pertransiit, in quo omnes peccaverunt* 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned.' That was the sense of the text as Augustine understood it. He interpreted the phrase *in quo* (ἐφ' ᾧ) to mean Adam. So does a commentary on Paul's Epistles ascribed to Ambrose but now credited to an unknown author labelled for convenience 'Ambrosiaster' (see 'The Godly Feast' n180): '*in quo*, id est in Adam' (PL 17 92c). The meaning of the text, according to Ambrosiaster, is that 'in Adam all have sinned as in a bulk' or lump (*massa*; on this word see Alexander Souter *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D.* [Oxford 1949]). Augustine reasons accordingly that every human being inherits the guilt of Adam's original sin, 'for we were all in that one man [Adam] when we were all that one man' (*De civitate Dei* 13.14). His great contemporary Chrysostom is less certain; see *In epistolam ad Romanos homiliae* 10.1 PG 60 474–5 and Erasmus *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 588B–D / CWE 56 146–7. Augustine held that if infants die unbaptized, without the 'laver of regeneration,' they are not saved but pass to eternal fire. Their sufferings there are much milder than those of actual and unrepentant sinners (*Enchiridion* 93 PL 40 275), but they are excluded from heaven (cf *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* 1.28.55 PL 44 140–1; *De Genesi ad litteram* 10.11.19 PL 34 415–16; *Sermones* 294.2–4 PL 38 1336–8; *Opus imperfectum contra Julianum* 3.199 PL 45 1332–3; *De correptione et gratia* 18 PL 44 926–7). All human beings are born corrupt; all need liberation by baptism, the sacrament that makes recipients members of the body of Christ, the church. For 'he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved' (Mark 16:16; cf John 3:5; Acts 2:37–42, 10:47–8; Gal 3:27). Augustine was concerned to refute the Pelagians, who in his judgment attributed too much to man's will, too little to his dependence – did he but acknowledge it – on divine grace. Damnation of unbaptized infants was a common but not unchallenged corollary of Augustinian teachings on grace. Pelagians argued that unbaptized infants enter into the 'kingdom of God' but not into eternal life. Augustine held that the two were the same. Appalling though a doctrine of infant damnation may be, Augustine did not shrink from what his reading of Scripture seemed to require. In the first edition of his New Testament, Erasmus suggested the change of *in quo* (ἐφ' ᾧ) in Rom 5:12 to *quatenus*, thus changing the meaning from 'in

whom all have sinned' to 'inasmuch' [or 'since' or 'because'] all have sinned,' and in subsequent editions he kept this changed translation; at the same time expanding his brief note in the 1516 edition to one that runs to six folio columns in the final (1535) edition and defending his translation on both grammatical and doctrinal grounds (LB VI 584F–590B / CWE 56 137–61). The difference between these two renderings is crucial, because – so Erasmus argues – the Apostle did not mean that all persons since Adam are *guilty*. True, they all inherit, as the human condition, the legacy or consequences of original sin; all have a natural proclivity or tendency to do evil, *naturali quadam pronitate ad peccandum*, but they do not inherit guilt. If they sin, they do so of their own volition, not of necessity. Therefore he does not believe an unbaptized child who 'dies when one day old, or dies at birth,' as the colloquy says, is 'consigned to eternal damnation.'

Erasmus is credited with being the first to give the Greek phrase ἐφ' ᾧ a causal sense. He had found a Latin manuscript containing thirteen commentaries on the Pauline Epistles. The manuscript attributed these to Jerome, but Erasmus judged that whoever the author was, he was certainly not Jerome – as all scholars now agree. Nevertheless he published these texts, because of their intrinsic value and antiquity, in the ninth volume of his edition of Jerome (Basel 1516, 9 vols in 5), and later editors, including Migne in PL, did likewise. The author was simply 'Pseudo-Jerome' to them. Erasmus noticed, as did some other early readers of the commentaries, the presence of many characteristic Pelagian ideas and teachings in this work. With some of these interpretations of original sin and the will, including those in Rom 5:12–14, Erasmus agrees. What he did not know, however, was that Pseudo-Jerome was Pelagius himself. This identification was conjectured in the seventeenth century by Richard Simon (1693) but never investigated thoroughly until Alexander Souter, in a series of painstaking studies, proved that these expositions were the work of Pelagius. See *Pelagius's Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of Paul* Texts and Studies 9, 3 vols (Cambridge 1922–31): I *Introduction* (1922); II *Text and Critical Apparatus* (1926); III *Pseudo-Jerome Interpolations* (1931).

Demonstration that these commentaries were by Pelagius would have pleased some of Erasmus' critics who accused him of Pelagianism. He denied this charge indignantly, but he can certainly be termed a 'semi-Pelagian.' Nor is he alone, he adds, in his distrust of the Augustinian doctrine deduced from Rom 5:12. Gerson too, he notes (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 622C), questions it (*Oeuvres* v 350 no 232). So does More. Writing to a monk who seemed to think the Fathers were never wrong, More brings up the name of Augustine: 'He asserts that infants who died unbaptized suffer physical torments in eternal punishment. How many now believe that?' (*Correspondence* 171:222–4). To differ with the Doctors about ambiguous texts is not, for Erasmus, heresy (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 589D–F / CWE 56 149–51; cf *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 933A–B).

The passage in Pelagius' commentary on Rom 5:12 (II 45:10–23 in Souter's edition) is quoted with approval in Erasmus' note (LB VI 586B–C / CWE 56 141–2; see also his Paraphrase on Romans LB VII 793A–B and CWE 42 34 and 147 n12). For studies of Erasmus as interpreter of Romans see John B. Payne in *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies* 2 ed Carl S. Meyer (St Louis 1971) 12–14; Albert Rabil Jr

Erasmus and the New Testament (San Antonio 1972) 115–39; Robert Coogan 'The Pharisee against the Hellenist: Edward Lee versus Erasmus' *Renaissance Quarterly* 39 (1986) 476–506. On Augustine as exegete see CHB I 541–63. Luther's lectures on the Vulgate text of Romans, written and delivered between April 1515 and September 1516, followed the medieval glosses in identifying *in quo* with Adam's original sin (WA 56 52 and n / LW 25 25–6). The first edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament with his notes was issued in the spring of 1516, probably too late for Luther to make use of it in his lectures. Not long afterwards, at any rate, he told Georgius Spalatinus in a letter of 19 October 1516 (WA *Briefwechsel* 1 or Clemen 6 Ep 27) that he was troubled because Erasmus did not take Augustine into account sufficiently when dealing with Romans 5; Erasmus should be advised to read Augustine against the Pelagians to improve his understanding. This message was brought to Erasmus' attention tactfully in a letter from Spalatinus of 11 December 1516 (Allen Ep 501:47–83 / CWE Ep 501:49–86), who does not name Luther but refers to him as a good friend. This was Erasmus' introduction to Martin Luther (see my *Inquisitio de fide* 6–7). A few years later Luther's translation of Rom 5:12 renders *in quo* by *dieweil* 'since', 'because' – equivalent to Erasmus' *quatenus* (WA *Deutsche Bibel* 7 45). Tyndale in turn renders ἐφ' ᾧ by 'insomuch' ('insomuch that all men sinned'), which is close to Erasmus' Latin and Luther's German. Tyndale was familiar with both but probably consulted the Greek text directly, as was his custom. Of subsequent English versions in the sixteenth century, the Coverdale of 1535, Great Bible of 1539–41, Geneva of 1560, Bishops' of 1568 keep Tyndale's 'insomuch.' The Roman Catholic version of 1582 has 'in which'; the Authorized Version of 1611 'for that' with a marginal gloss 'Or, in whom.' Thus a typical Erasman investigation of a grammatical distinction led to significant clarification and reinterpretation of a major theological text.

63 Lev 19:19; Deut 22:11

64 Sumptuary laws regulated such matters for the laity (see 'The Council of Women' 909:22–910:5), but the allusions here are mainly to ecclesiastical dress. Cf 705:16, 21–4, 28–30 below and 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 476:2–482:4; also 'The Seraphic Funeral.'

65 On confession see 'Youth' 96:31–97:35; on tithes 'The New Mother' 592:28–9; on laws of marriage and affinity *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 630–56 (633A–642A describes seventeen impediments, of various kinds, to marriage) and, in the *Colloquies*, 'Courtship' nn48 and 84. Regulations controlling marriage were legacies from Roman law, native custom, and religion. Elaborate tables of consanguinity and affinity had become fixed in canon law. See the *arbor consanguinitatis* and *arbor affinitatis* in Friedberg I 1425–6, 1431–2. The second table is reproduced also in Steven Ozment *When Fathers Ruled* (Cambridge, Mass 1983). Such tables sometimes presented almost insuperable obstacles to matches.

66 Acts 2:1–4, describing the first occurrence of 'speaking in tongues'

67 Acts 15:10. The entire chapter helps to explain this allusion to Peter.

68 Often a deprecatory as well as descriptive term in Erasmus' commentaries on biblical texts and writings on Christian life and morals. 'By Judaism I mean the differentiating of foods and corporal things of this kind which by nature are neither good nor bad' (*Supputatio* LB IX 473A).

- 69 The 'scattered islands' may be the Caribbean islands and whatever coastal regions of Central and South America had been explored or discovered by the time this colloquy was written. Allusions to the New World, the Americas, in Erasmus' pages are discussed at 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n7 and 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n82. Columbus' letter of 14 March 1493 announcing his discovery was printed several times. Erasmus may have seen it, but whether he did so or not he had opportunities to read other accounts of the new lands – Vespucci's for example – and to hear of such matters in courts and councils. As humanist, moralist, and Christian he was in a sense compelled to take an interest in the New World, but it was no specialty of his. The present passage is a sobering observation on an aspect of that new world that was of interest to Erasmus: is it really Christian, as the fishmonger's question implies? Of course 'wholeheartedly and sincerely professes Christianity' begs the question, but even nominal Christendom was a fairly small portion of the globe. 'How small a corner of the world is left to us!' (*Adagia* IV i 1 LB II 967F). Islam had conquered everything to the east. Christian efforts to win the Holy Land had ended in failure, and the so-called Christian realms now had to defend themselves against attacks by the Turks (see 'The New Mother' n19). No use to argue, then, about whether the recently discovered islands are Christian; first we had better make sure the Christianity we hope to export is the right kind. Other allusions by Erasmus to the constriction of Christendom occur in *De bello Turcico* LB V 357E–358A; *Ecclesiastes* LB V 813B–814A; *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1175A; *Epistola ad fratres Inferioris Germaniae* LB X 1623E–F / ASD IX-1 408:755–9; Allen Ep 1183:12–16 / CWE Ep 1183:14–18; *Vita Hieronymi* (Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 179:1198–1201 / CWE 61 52). Sebastian Brant's popular *Narrenschiff* (1494; issued a dozen times by 1521) has a long and melancholy section (99) on the decline of Christianity (trans E.H. Zeydel [New York 1944; repr 1962] 315–22). Erasmus, who had met Brant and thought well of him (Allen Ep 305:165–9, 255–6 / CWE Ep 305:170–4, 265), may have read the poem either in German or, more likely, in Latin translation.
- 70 An echo of Matt 9:37. The reflection in the lines that follow on the kind of Christianity that would be most persuasive – a simpler one than the European mode and freed from Mosaic law and the burden of unnecessary human ordinances – is characteristic of Erasmus. He wrote little on foreign missions, but was one of the very few humanists or reformers who wrote anything at all on this subject. See Marcel Bataillon 'Évangélisme et millénarisme au nouveau monde' in *Courants religieux et humanisme à la fin du xv^e et au début du xvi^e siècle* (Paris 1959) 25–36; George H. Williams 'Erasmus and the Reformers on Non-Christian Religions and *Salus Extra Ecclesiam*' in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe* ed Theodore K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel (Princeton 1969) 333, 356–7. A few Spanish theologians were quick to perceive that native Indians presented an opportunity to which European Christians, through missions, had a duty to respond. See Lewis Hanke 'The Theological Significance of the Discovery of America' in *First Images of America* ed Fredi Chiapelli, 2 vols (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1976) I 363–89. An article on Erasmus and missions by C.J. Huygens in *Het Missiewerk* 17 (1936) 198–213 I have not seen. Consult Margolin *Bibliographie érasmiennne* (1936–1949) 59 no 139, 126 no 363, 263 no 801.

- 71 Such as genuflections and making the sign of the cross. Erasmus has much to say about preachers' gesticulations in *Eccelesiastes* LB v 964C–965C, 987A–B. He must have in mind Matt 6:5–7 on ostentatious prayer also.
- 72 See 705:16–32 below.
- 73 Cf 'The Godly Feast' 196:3–9 and the explanation that follows, especially n220.
- 74 *Nulla salus extra ecclesiam* was an influential dictum from Cyprian Ep 73:21 CSEL 3 part 2 795 (compare his *De unitate* 6 CSEL 3 part 1 214–15). See 'Faith' n108 on its relevance to that colloquy, to 'The Godly Feast,' and to other writings by Erasmus. His opponents in the theological faculty at Paris deplored the butcher's arguments as both pernicious and arrogant, worthy of Wyclif and Luther, for they thought him wrong about the burden of Mosaic law. Erasmus replies that the butcher's arguments are countered by the fishmonger's, but he then proceeds to restate the butcher's, obviously with approval. He protests that he does not advocate disobedience of ecclesiastical ordinances prescribed by authority, but that there is too much assertiveness about the divine origin of what are in fact human ordinances. To love God with our whole heart and our neighbours as ourselves is a divine precept; to fast is a human regulation. For the same reason certain apostolic ordinances can be questioned; for example, that women should not speak in church (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 950B–951F).
- 75 Perhaps ambiguous. The definition of the church in 'Faith' (429:4–8) says nothing about the papacy, but note the ironic remark at 422:10–11.
- 76 The same play on *clemens* and *Clement* occurs in Allen Ep 1414:73. Clement VII, pope 1423–34, was a member of the Medici family, like his cousin Leo X. He succeeded Erasmus' friend Adrian VI (1522–3). Erasmus dedicated his Paraphrase on Acts to Clement in 1524 and received a flattering acknowledgment and a gift of money (Allen Epp 1414 and 1466:3–6 / CWE Ep 1414 and 1466:4–7). Erasmus concludes Ep 1414 with a fervent hope, as in this paragraph of the colloquy, that Clement's pontificate will revive a languishing church. For other correspondence of Erasmus and this pope see Epp 1418, 1438, 1588, 1846, 1987.
- 77 Tax, consisting of the first year's revenue, owed to the papal curia by one appointed to a bishopric or the headship of a monastery. Cf *Ratio verae theologiae* LB v 89A–B.
- 78 Granted for many canonical irregularities, often those affecting marriages. They were conferred by popes, bishops, sometimes by parish priests. An example occurs in 'The Funeral' 771:20–1. As was true of many other privileges, payment of a fee was expected (see Kidd *Documents* 113 no 61), and not only for dispensations but for performance of ordinary duties such as baptism. See 'The Funeral' 771:38 and 'The Godly Feast' 196:18.
- 79 *pestilens Ate*, the spirit of discord (*Iliad* 9.504–12). See *Adagia* I vii 13 and *Antibarbari* CWE 23 27:28, 39:8. In the pages that follow Erasmus refers to recent events in the rivalry between the two most powerful monarchs in Europe; Charles I of Spain, who had become Holy Roman Emperor as Charles V in 1519, and Francis I, king of France from 1515. Erasmus was on good terms with both monarchs and dedicated important writings to them: his Paraphrase on Matthew to Charles (1522) and on Mark to Francis (1523 but issued 1524). He was appointed to Charles' privy council in 1515. His duties were nominal, but

he was entitled to a stipend, which was paid irregularly (Allen Ep 370:18n). He flattered rulers, as decorum required, yet was frank on topics he thought deserving of frankness, reminding king and emperor alike of their Christian duty to seek peace and pursue it. His dedicatory letter to Francis (Ep 1400) tactfully avoids unseemly partisanship but is stern about the unappeasable ambitions of rulers and the ruthlessness of their incessant warring.

War between France and the empire had broken out afresh in 1521. Charles drove the French from Milan. He was supported by Henry VIII and the pope in this conflict. In 1524 the French reconquered Milan; then the pope had second thoughts and joined the French side. At Pavia in February 1525 the French suffered a crushing defeat. Francis was captured and taken to Madrid, where he was kept as prisoner until the Treaty of Madrid was signed in January 1526. By the treaty he surrendered his claims to Burgundy (now a Hapsburg possession) and to Italian territories. These agreements he had no intention of keeping, repudiating them as soon as he was liberated, and he was again at war with the empire in 1527. He formed an alliance with the pope, Milan, Venice, and Florence against Charles v; England gave formal but little active support. One consequence of the war was the famous sack of Rome by imperial soldiers in May 1527. See the introduction to 'Charon.'

- 80 In the original a proverbial expression in Greek (literally 'to the crows!') alluding to exposure of a corpse in a field for carrion birds to devour. To be left unburied was a hideous disgrace among ancient Greeks. The phrase is not in *Adagia*, but see *Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium* in Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 208:62.
- 81 The *Institutio principis christiani* dedicated to Charles by Erasmus (Ep 393) is a 'mirror for princes' applicable to all rulers, and naturally Erasmus hoped this prince would ponder and follow its counsels. Whether Charles read it, or how much of it, is not known, but in any event it is for modern readers the best compendium of Erasmus' political thought and therefore useful to students of sixteenth-century ideas. See the critical edition by O. Herding in ASD IV-1; there are English translations by Lester K. Born (New York 1936) and by Neil M. Cheshire and Michael J. Heath in CWE 27 199–288.
- As emperor, Charles v respected Erasmus, and he or his officers consulted him occasionally on ecclesiastical affairs. See Allen Epp 2335:19–26, 2634:13–21. When Erasmus informed Charles in September 1527 of attacks by some of the emperor's Spanish subjects who were displeased by publication of translations into Spanish of some of Erasmus' colloquies, Charles wrote a letter expressing his gratitude for Erasmus' services to religion, adding that his books contained nothing dangerous; if any 'human failing' is found in them, the author very willingly corrects or explains them in such a way that no offence remains (Allen Epp 1873 and 1920). For other letters by the emperor to or about Erasmus see Epp 1270, 1380, 1731, 2318, 2553.
- 82 Charles was born in 1500.
- 83 'We can see that it often turned out that in striving to extend their power they [the ancients, to whom Erasmus compares his contemporaries] lost even what they already had' *Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 606F / ASD IV-1 212:423–5, and see 214:490–5 / Born 247, 250 / CWE 27 281, 283. On lawyers, see *Querela pacis* LB IV 628B / ASD IV-2 66:122–7 / CWE 27 296.

- 84 Erasmus makes a similar jest about Luther's marriage: until lately Lutheranism looked like a tragedy; now, since it ends in a marriage, we know it is a comedy (Allen and CWE Ep 1655:1-5).
- 85 Erasmus thought dynastic marriages a risky custom at best. A prince would do better to marry within his own nation or with close neighbours (*Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 603D-606A / ASD IV-1 208:286-209:341 / Born 241-3 / CWE 27 277-9). See E.V. Telle 'Erasme et les mariages dynastiques' BHR 12 (1950) 7-13.
- 86 Another source of endless trouble between states, since princes too often fail to keep their word (*Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 603A-604C / ASD IV-1 206:225-84 / Born 238-40 / CWE 27 275-6). A notable passage in More's *Utopia* is invincibly sceptical of the worth of treaties (Yale CWM 4 87-9). The Utopians simply refuse to make treaties (197-9). See also *Adagia* IV i 1 LB II 965A-C and the notes to 'Charon.'
- 87 Erasmus' tract on the cost and futility of war, *Adagia* IV i 1: *Dulce bellum inexpertis*, has an interesting analogue to this speech: a proposal by a litigant to his adversary that they settle their differences out of court by agreement or arbitration, Erasmus' favourite remedy for war. The situation here as described by the emperor is, from Erasmus' point of view, much the same. See LB II 965A-966C; translation in Phillips 'Adages' 340-3.
- 88 *malus . . . genius*; see *Adagia* I i 72 and 'Rash Vows' n22.
- 89 At Pavia, (see n79 above). The Treaty of Madrid (January 1526) ended his captivity, but he was not actually released until March of that year, a month after publication of this colloquy. The remark that 'fortune . . . made you a captive' must therefore have been written between February 1525 and February 1526. The same evidence applies to the mention in 'The New Mother' 592:19-20 of Francis as a 'guest' of the Spaniards. Whether Erasmus wrote 'A Fish Diet' with his usual rapidity or worked on it from time to time is not known, but probably it is safe to assume that both dialogues were completed or in parts revised in 1525.
- Three months after the return of Francis to Paris, Erasmus sent him a letter (Allen Ep 1722, 16 June 1526) expressing his and the public's joy that the war between the two mighty monarchs, a war 'like that between sun and moon' and hence a peril to mortals, was ended. Then he turns to his other purpose in writing this letter: to complain of the scandalous behaviour of his Parisian enemies Noël Bédard and Pierre Cousturier, who have slandered him and Lefèvre d'Etaples and Louis de Berquin. June 1526 was a difficult time for Erasmus. The faculty of theology at Paris had just censured the *Colloquies*, an action that impelled Erasmus to add a defence of the book to the June 1526 edition. See the introduction to 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1096-7.
- 90 As it soon did. See introduction and notes to 'Charon.'
- 91 Made fools of ourselves; *Adagia* I vii 30
- 92 These lines introduce an inquiry concerning the central problem that controls the remainder of the dialogue. For a collection of official definitions and pronouncements on popes and papacy see Denzinger-Schönmetzer *Enchiridion*, Index systematicus III a. In addition to works already cited in this book see, concerning Erasmus' relations with Rome, Karl Schätti *Erasmus von Rotterdam und die Römische Kurie* (Basel and Stuttgart 1954); Georg Gebhardt *Die Stellung*

des Erasmus von Rotterdam zur Römische Kirche (Marburg 1966), and on this topic Bainton's comment in his review in ARG 59 (1968) 249–50; C.D. McCullough 'The Concept of Law in the Thought of Erasmus' ERSY 1 (1981) 89–112.

- 93 For some comments of Erasmus on bishops see n254 below.
- 94 See 'A Pilgrimage' n100. On the 'conditions' see the Benedictine Rule chapters 1, 3, 46. In *De libero arbitrio* Erasmus says some extremists hold that even the regulations of mere priors (priorculorum) are binding on pain of hell-fire (LB IX 1247A).
- 95 See *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 696D–697C; *Enarratio in psalmum xxxviii* LB V 435B–C. For example, after a general chapter in 1322 Franciscan Spirituals, relying on the preamble to a bull by Nicholas III, *Exiit qui seminat* (1279), maintained that this pope had defined the absolute poverty of Christ as an article of faith. But John xxii declared the teaching heretical (*Cum inter nonnullos* [1323]; Denzinger-Schönmetzer *Enchiridion* 288–9 nos 930–1). Very many (*plerique*) theologians, says Erasmus, assert that the pope can abrogate what was instituted by the apostles, even by Peter (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 696A; *Supputatio* LB IX 641D).
- 96 A 'true,' general, ecumenical council, as contrasted with a regional one, was considered to represent the entire church. 'Just as the universal church cannot err in determining matters of faith and morals, so too a true council, in its official capacity, cannot err . . . nor can the pope' (Silvester Prierias *Dialogus de potestate papae*; Kidd *Documents* 31 no 15). See E.F. Jacob 'The Conciliar Movement in Recent Study' *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 41 (1958) 26–53. As the colloquy shows, disputes about conciliar theory were still alive in Erasmus' lifetime. We might expect that a writer so deeply concerned with reforms as he was would be a conciliarist; but he cannot be counted as one. He saw clearly the advantages of papalism and of conciliarism but had reservations about both. For practical and historical reasons he accepted papal primacy but had his doubts about papal infallibility and absolute authority. Popes can err and have erred. His attitude towards papal primacy may be compared with that towards the sacrament of penance: he accepts it, but does not agree that in its present form it was instituted by Christ. He does not advocate a general council. A *Consilium* (1521) he wrote (or had a hand in writing) proposed as a remedy for the Lutheran troubles the appointment of a learned commission by Charles v, Henry VIII, and Louis II of Hungary. For text of the *Consilium* see Ferguson *Erasmii opuscula* 338–61.

On Erasmus and papal primacy see H.J. McSorley 'Erasmus and the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff: Between Conciliarism and Papalism' ARG 65 (1974) 35–54. On Erasmus and conciliarism see J.K. McConica 'Erasmus and the "Julius"' in *The Pursuit of Holiness* ed Charles Trinkaus and H.A. Oberman (Leiden 1974) 462–7, and his article 'Erasmus and the Grammar of Consent' in *Scrinium Erasmanum* II 77–99 on *concordia* and the *consensus fidelium*, two principles vital to the integrity of the church, since, for Erasmus, the church is the *consensus populi Christiani* (Allen Ep 1729:26–9). Councils were once useful, but now are compromised by the conduct of princes, prelates, and preachers (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 64F–65D).

Texts of councils are printed in Johannes Mansi et al *Sacrorum conciliorum collectio* 1758–98 (facsimile ed Paris 1901–13, 47 vols in 50) and see Tanner. The

most extensive history is C.J. Hefele and K. Hergenröther *Conciliengeschichte* (Freiburg 1855–90; French translation and enlargement by H. Leclercq, 10 vols in 19 (Paris 1907–38). For a concise history see Hubert Jedin *Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church* trans E. Graf (New York 1960). Other studies in English: Brian Tierney *Foundations of Conciliar Theory* (Cambridge 1955); *Unity, Heresy, and Reform 1378–1460* ed C.M.D. Crowder (New York 1977); Anthony Black *Monarchy and Community* (Cambridge 1970) and *Council and Commune* (London 1979); F. Oakley 'Almain and Major: Conciliar Theory on the Eve of the Reformation' *American Historical Review* 70 (1964–5) 673–90 and 'Conciliarism in the Sixteenth Century: Jacques Almain Again' *ARG* 68 (1977) 111–32.

- 97 The Council of Constance (1414–18) declared that its authority came immediately from Christ and that all men, including the popes, were bound to obey its orders in matters concerning the faith (session 4; Tanner I 408) and decreed (*Frequens*) that councils should meet frequently (session 39; Tanner I 438–9). When the council convened there were three claimants to the papacy. Gregory XII resigned; the council deposed Benedict XIII and John XXIII and elected Martin V. It condemned the teachings of Wyclif and Jan Hus, the Bohemian reformer, and turned Hus over to the secular power. For the text and translation of the proceedings of the council see Tanner I 405–51. The Council of Basel (continued in several cities, 1431–45) renewed the conflict with the papacy. The most extreme conciliarists affirmed the ecumenicity of the Council of Basel, but the majority of later theologians rejected most or all of it; text and translation in Tanner I 455–591. On Basel see Black *Council and Commune* (preceding note) and J.W. Stieber *Pope Eugenius IV, the Council of Basel and the Secular and Ecclesiastical Authorities in the Empire* (Leiden 1978). Pius II in the bull *Execrabilis* (1460) forbade under pain of excommunication appeals from the pope to future councils (Denzinger-Schönmetzer *Enchiridion* 345 no 1375). The only other council held in Erasmus' lifetime was the Fifth Lateran (1512–17). Before he was elected pope, Julius II promised to convene a council within two years. When he failed to do so, the emperor Maximilian I and Louis XII of France, with a group of cardinals, called a council at Pisa (1511). Julius excommunicated the cardinals, the so-called council languished, and a few months later the pope summoned a council to meet at the Lateran palace in Rome. Julius died in February 1513 and was succeeded by Leo X. This council's chances of success seemed promising at first, but hopes were disappointed. It advocated a crusade against the Turks and enacted desirable but ineffectual measures of reform pertaining to printing, preaching, pluralism, and much else, including the apparently invincible problem of sacerdotal celibacy; text and translation in Tanner I 595–655. On this council see F. Oakley 'Conciliarism at the Fifth Lateran Council' *Church History* 41 (1972) 452–63; R.J. Schoeck 'The Fifth Lateran Council' in *Reform and Authority in the Medieval and Reformation Church* ed Guy F. Lytle (Washington, DC 1981) 99–126; and Nelson H. Minnich *The Fifth Lateran Council (1512–17)* (Brookfield, VT 1993). Although Erasmus allowed that this council may have done some good, he doubted that it was a true council, for it was not a universal, and therefore not an ecumenical, one; cf Allen Ep 1268:35–41 / CWE Ep 1268:38–44. For Erasmus' treatment of it in *Julius exclusus* see Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 94:515–102:702 / CWE 27 190–5 / *The*

'*Julius Exclusus*' of Erasmus trans Paul Pascal ed J. Kelley Sowards (Bloomington 1968) 64:516–71:701; see also McConica's article in *The Pursuit of Holiness* (cited in the preceding note). On Luther's hostile reaction to this Lateran council see John Headley 'Luther and the Fifth Lateran Council' ARG 64 (1973) 55–78).

- 98 On the primacy of Peter and the papacy's Petrine claims see Erasmus' note on Matt 16:18 (LB VI 88C–F) and compare his Paraphrase on Matthew (LB VII 92F–93A). The note in LB VI recognizes that some persons apply Matt 16:18 to the Roman pontiff as *princeps* of the Christian faith, but Erasmus does not endorse this title. Augustine says in one place that 'upon this rock' means the faith in Christ professed by Peter in Matt 16:16 (*In epistolam Joannis ad Parthos tractatus* x 10.1 PL 35 2054). In another place Augustine says 'Peter' signifies the church (*Sermones* 76.1 PL 38 479). Later, in *Retractationes* 1.20 (21) (PL 32 618), he invites readers to decide which of these opinions is more probable. Erasmus agrees that Peter may be taken as a 'type,' 'one speaking for all,' as Cyprian thought (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 88E–F; he means Cyprian Ep 59.7 CSEL 3 part 2 674). See further C.A.L. Jarrott 'Erasmus' Biblical Humanism' *Studies in the Renaissance* 17 (1970) 135–40.

Erasmus had no trouble with the jurisdictional authority of the papacy. Whatever the source of that authority, a pontiff is needed, not only to settle disputes but to restrain the tyranny of other bishops. The pope should not be blamed for everything that happens in Rome. Even Peter, if he were there now, would have to tolerate things he did not really approve of (Allen Ep 1183:68–85 / CWE Ep 1183:75–94). But Erasmus had grave doubts about claims of papal infallibility. 'Apostle,' 'pastor,' 'bishop' are designations of office, not of sovereignty; 'pope' and 'abbot' are attributes of love (*caritas*), not power (*Enchiridion* LB v 49B / Holborn 107:14–16 / CWE 66 101; *De concordia* and *De esu carniū* passim). Pope and church together, not the pope alone, share the keys. Similarly councils, if universal, may have the authority of a heavenly oracle as the fishmonger has assured us. For other references to papal authority and infallibility see *Ratio verae theologiae* LB v 90F–91B; *Apologiae contra Stunicam* LB IX 364A–365D, 370D–371F, 385E, 386A–389A; *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1067A–1068D; *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1179B–1181D; *Spongia* LB x 1631–72 / ASD IX-1 117–210 passim. On different sixteenth-century Roman Catholic interpretations of Matt 16:18 see John E. Bigane III *Faith, Christ, or Peter* (Washington 1981).

- 99 *constitutionibus*. Constitutions are ordinances or regulations of popes, bishops, and sometimes heads of religious orders (as in *De esu carniū* LB IX 1206B). A papal rescript is a reply to a question or request, usually but not always limited to the person who submitted it.
- 100 Erasmus told the Louvain theologians (1522) that 'If any pontifical or episcopal constitution whatever exposes us to the penalty of hell-fire, the position of Christians is hard indeed. If some constitutions bind us and some do not, no one is in a better position to make his purpose clear than the pontiff himself' (Allen Ep 1301: 66–8 / CWE Ep 1301:121–4). If bishops' regulations are useful and fair, they should be obeyed, at least until a synod meets and decides about them (*De concordia* LB v 504F–505B; cf *Supputatio* LB IX 641D).
- 101 See *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* (1531) LB IX 1181E–1183A for a defence of what Erasmus had written on human ordinances.
- 102 Deut 4:2, 12:32

- 103 *in corbanam*. Literally 'what is for corban'; see Matt 27:6; Mark 7:9–13. Jesus accused the Pharisees of evading the duty of helping one's parents by a pretence that money used for such a purpose was dedicated to God in the offering (*corban*, a Greek borrowing from Aramaic) and therefore was unavailable for secular use. Thus they disobeyed the commandment 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' Cf *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1025F.
- 104 The conversation at dinner in 'The Godly Feast' assumes a variety of possible interpretations of scriptural passages, and Eusebius mentions 'the various conjectures of commentators'; those referred to are identified in n116.
- 105 *in palaestris theologicis*. See *Adagia* v ii 10.
- 106 Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest who tried Jesus; John 18:13.
- 107 See 'The Godly Feast' 182:31–3 and n95.
- 108 This question brings us closer to the heart of the argument, summed up at 701:21–702:5.
- 109 After the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem in 586 BC
- 110 See n55 above.
- 111 Proverbial; *Adagia* I v 10
- 112 *simplici stupro* 'simple fornication,' a technical term in moral theology. Cf n201 below; and see *Enchiridion* LB V 53C–D / Holborn 115:9–10 / CWE 66 108; *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 678F–679C. Erasmus allows that in some circumstances there is no simple answer to the question of the gravity of this sin (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 879B–C).
- 113 See 717:34–718:8 below.
- 114 On kinds of lies and their effects see 'The Liar and the Man of Honour'; 'Things and Names'; 'Sympathy' 1045:33–1046:7; *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1194A–1196A. The remark on 'a little white lie' echoes one in *Moriae encomium* LB IV 465B / ASD IV-3 148:414–6 / CWE 27 127.
- 115 'Opened a window to'; *Adagia* I iv 3
- 116 Colossal, wondrous; cf 'Benefices' 45:21 and n5.
- 117 Canons forbidding clergy in major orders, such as priests, deacons, and monks, to marry date from the First Lateran Council of 1123 (canon 21; Tanner I 194) and the Second of 1139 (canons 6, 7; Tanner I 198).
- 118 'Boundary-mark' and in Roman religion the god and protector of such marks or limits. Erasmus used a representation of Terminus on an antique ring, given to him by a royal pupil (the Scottish prince Alexander Stewart), as his personal emblem, and he had a seal engraved by Metsys bearing the motto *Cedo nulli* 'I yield to none.' See J.K. McConica 'The Riddle of Terminus' *Erasmus in English* 2 (1971) 2–7, and Robert D. Sider 'Concedo Nulli: Erasmus' Motto and the Figure of Paul in the Paraphrases' in the same newsletter 14 (1985–6) 7–10.
- 119 Vows are temporal or perpetual, conditional or absolute, public or private, solemn or simple. A vow is public if accepted in the name of the church by an authorized ecclesiastical officer; otherwise it is private. It is solemn if recognized by the church as such; otherwise it is simple. See, for example, the study of the vow in the Middle Ages by James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader* (Madison, Milwaukee, and London 1969) 30–114; NCE XIV 756 (sv 'Vow, Canon Law of'). A solemn vow is regarded as absolute and irrevocable when accepted by authority. Public vows are 'reserved' to the pope and can be abrogated or dispensed only by papal permission. Private vows

- of 'perfect and perpetual chastity,' and vows taken when entering a religious order (in which solemn vows are required), are also reserved to the Holy See. Erasmus reminded critics that these terms 'solemn' and 'simple' are the words of men, not of Scripture. He denied an opponent's assertion that a solemn vow is one taken with mature deliberation, whereas a simple vow is not. On the contrary a simple vow, Erasmus contends, is often taken with the same deliberation as a solemn one. It is not so public but is just as much a vow as a solemn one is (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1185A; *Institutio christianii matrimonii* LB V 636A; *Appendix de scriptis Jodoci Clithovei* LB IX 814A–B).
- 120 Cf 'Rash Vows' 37:5–38:20, 'The Old Men's Chat' 458:30–8, 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1098:25–1100:4.
- 121 refrain from going] Reading *non ibit* for *ibit*, as in all editions but the first, February 1526
- 122 *Quod solet fieri*. The Fishmonger's reply may strike the reader as odd. The explanation lies in the ancient derivation of *solemnis* from *solet fieri* 'is accustomed to happen'; see Isidore *Etymologiae* 6.18.1 (the reading of manuscripts *cruv* in the Oxford Classical Texts edition).
- 123 'Drinkable gold,' volatile oil containing minute particles of gold and drunk as a medicine or cordial. The double meaning provided a common jest, for example in a letter by Warham to Erasmus (Ep 286) and in the General Prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* 443–4.
- 124 See the account of Erasmus' visit to Freiburg at 713:18–714:8.
- 125 Exod 16:23, 20:8, 23:12, 31:13–14, 34:21, 35:2; Lev 23:3; Num 15:32–7; Deut 5:12. Cf the examples at 707:22–708:20 below.
- 126 Mark 2:27. In *Supputatio* LB IX 646A–F Erasmus defends against Béda what he had written about the sabbath. For a later exposition of the meaning of sabbath see *Explanatio symboli* (1533) LB V 1190B–1191D.
- 127 'I call law human whenever man prescribes to man what is not set forth in those writings whose authority it is unrighteous for anyone to doubt. Whatever good men do willingly, it is likely that the Spirit is not far from them. But we are not required to believe that the Spirit by whose divine influence the apostles wrote is present in all men who make law' (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1145B–C).
- 128 Cf 695:32–696:41 below.
- 129 Writing in 1522 to Joost Lauwereyns, a leading member of Charles v's council, and complaining of attacks on 'heresy' in the earlier colloquies – meaning certain pages of 'The Profane Feast' in the March 1522 edition (see n76) – Erasmus questions whether the pope would wish to bind people to eating fish under penalty of eternal damnation (Allen Ep 1299:69–71 / CWE Ep 1299:77–9; cf Allen Epp 1300:32–5, 1301:66–74 / CWE Epp 1300:35–9, 1301:121–38; *De esu carniuum* LB IX 1204C). Furthermore, what a pope's or bishop's threat of eternal damnation means is in doubt. See *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 64C; *De esu carniuum* LB IX 1202A, 1205C–F, 1206D, 1208F–1209B. Cf what is said of 'thunderbolts' (excommunications) at 696:31–41 below.
- 130 On custom in general, see 'The Profane Feast' n58; on liturgical customs, see 'The Godly Feast' 196:3–39. Some examples of the conflict between law (Mosaic) and custom are presented in *Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 86F–88C / Holborn 198:34–201:33. In *De esu carniuum* Erasmus writes on the custom of fasting,

'Surely it is probable that custom does not bind anyone more strictly than the authors of the custom intended' (LB IX 1204F; cf 1206C).

- 131 Matt 5:34. Lev 19:12 has: 'Ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God'; that is, by adding an oath (cf James 5:12 and Num 30:2). Christ goes further: 'Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool . . . But let your communication be, Yea, yea, Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil' (Matt 5:33-7). He wants his followers to be such that there is no need of swearing. Some theologians, Erasmus tells us, took 'for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil' to mean 'from lack of trust' or faith, not the evil of swearing (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 29E-F). Mere avoidance of perjury is not, as it was in the Old Law, enough. A Christian should not swear by anything, for everything is sacred to the creator. An affirmation or denial must be sincere; and if it is, no swearing is necessary. 'And so,' as Erasmus paraphrases Christ's words, 'when I totally prohibit swearing I do not abrogate the law which forbids perjury but fulfil it' (Paraphrase on Matthew LB VII 33A-D. See also *Lingua* LB IV 692D-693A / ASD IV-1A 84:914-85:948 / CWE 29 316-17).

St Paul disapproved of oaths but calls attention to their public use. He uses them himself (as in Rom 1:9; 2 Cor 1:23, 11:31; Gal 1:20; Phil 1:8), though he was justified in doing so because his testimony was inspired. Ordinary folk, on the other hand, ought to eschew oaths because swearing might lead them to perjury (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 837C-D). Experience with non-Christians and unavoidable dealings with civil courts and other political authorities forced the church to interpret Matt 5:37 less literally and to accommodate it to otherwise intractable situations, as Erasmus regretfully acknowledges. Nevertheless his notes and paraphrase on Matt 5:37 cost him some trouble. For his explanations see his reply to Edward Lee (LB IX 131D-132A); to Béda and other Paris critics (LB IX 462A-E, 493F-494A, 575B-576C, 834C-840D); to the Spanish monks (LB IX 1078A-C); and to Alberto Pio (LB IX 1193E-1194A). Swearing an oath may be necessary but is a sign of human weakness (Allen Ep 1581:728-30 / CWE Ep 1581:813-14).

- 132 Technical terms commonly used in defining or describing Christian law and rules of morality. Precepts are rules or commandments, some found in Scripture (the Decalogue, for instance) and others imposed by the church, that are obligatory for all Christians. Counsels are advice or recommendations by which to improve or 'grow in grace' and goodness in moral behaviour. 'Honour thy father and thy mother' is a precept. 'Would that all men were even as I myself' (that is, celibate; 1 Cor 7:7) is not a precept but what is called sometimes an 'evangelical counsel.' 'Swear not at all' is an imperative, uttered by Christ. Is it not therefore surely a precept? Yet the fishmonger suggests it is a counsel, and whether he knows or is guessing, tradition agreed that oaths are sometimes necessary. See Thomas Aquinas *Summa theologiae* II-II q 89 art 2-3. Aquinas held that the difference between 'precept' and 'counsel' is that a precept implies obligation, whereas a counsel is left to the option of one who receives it. A Christian has no choice about precepts; they must be obeyed (*Summa theologiae* I-II q 108 art 4). Many counsels are given by Christ and the apostles, and the devout and prudent will, of course, follow them as best

they can. But counsels do not bind unconditionally. Such distinctions were common knowledge. One of the reasons for disagreement over the argument of *Moriae encomium*, Erasmus remarks, is that Folly herself does not understand the difference between precepts and counsels (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1140F).

- 133 This is the answer to the assertion at 694:38–41, and the fishmonger concedes the point. In writing against Pio, Erasmus recalls two passages in earlier colloquies relevant to this question of human ordinances, ‘Youth’ 97:18–21 and ‘The Godly Feast’ 185:34–8 (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1182B–C, D–E).
- 134 Exod 20:15; Deut 5:19; Matt 19:18
- 135 Matt 5:39
- 136 See n100 above.
- 137 *Adagia* I v 29
- 138 To the fishmonger these words sound much alike. But when dire threats of excommunication are added, a counsel becomes in effect a precept. The intention of the person who utters the words makes the difference, though the fishmonger suspects ‘it’s not suitable for the common people to know this.’ This practice of commanding with the addition of threats of punishment, even hell-fire, was to Erasmus a scandal, demanding rational and charitable settlement. See *De esu carniū* LB IX 1204D–1208E.
- 139 Ecclesiastical intervention, by means of papal or episcopal excommunication, was sometimes used to compel recalcitrant debtors to pay what they owed, no matter what their social rank or status. If a debtor died while excommunicated, his survivors might be required to pay for him. See H.C. Lea *Studies in Church History* (Philadelphia 1869) 439–48. In England bishops had to invoke the aid of the secular arm to arrest a fugitive debtor. (Such requests identified or ‘signified’ the person wanted; hence the warning by Chaucer’s Summoner to beware *Significavit*; see General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* 662). Many details are provided by F. Donald Logan *Excommunication and the Secular Arm in Medieval England* (Toronto 1968). Among the numerous types of lay persons excommunicated, fishmongers and butchers are named. Erasmus’ butcher is not joking or imagining impossibilities when he speaks of being excommunicated if, as an insolvent debtor, he might ‘prefer to run off’ rather than go to prison. If his creditors then complained to the bishop, the bishop could excommunicate the fugitive and call upon the secular power to seek and seize him. Such procedures appear to have been fairly successful, both on the Continent and in England, but resort to them diminished by the sixteenth century, as secular governments were increasingly taking such matters into their own hands.
- 140 Excommunication. Popes, general councils, and bishops or their authorized deputies in their own dioceses had power to excommunicate; parish priests did not.
- 141 The fishmonger means the code of Roman law (c 450 BC), whose extreme punishments – for example that debtors should be cut in pieces – were not enforced (Gellius 20.1.19, 39–55; Quintilian 3.6.84); see *Adagia* I x 24 CWE 32 244, 374. Cf *De esu carniū* LB IX 1209A.
- 142 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.137
- 143 Making a futile gesture. Cf *Adagia* I vii 23; *De copia* 1.11 CWE 24 308:1–2.

- 144 *Adagia* IV v 32
- 145 An aphorism or quotation, source unknown. It appears, with 'most steadfast' for 'steadfast,' in the *Chronica maiora* of Matthew Paris (d 1259); see Rolls Series 57, 7 vols (London 1872–83) III 481. G.G. Coulton says it is 'a stock phrase of the law-courts for a man pleading that he had signed or acted under compelling force' (*Europe's Apprenticeship* [London 1940] 251n).
- 146 The words quoted are from Horace *Odes* 3.3.7. Cf *De taedio Iesu* LB V 1275D–E.
- 147 The word play is in the original: *famis aut infamiae*.
- 148 Even a secret marriage was then valid. See 'Courtship' nn48 and 84.
- 149 'Contracted a marriage' (*contraxit matrimonium*) can mean here 'has married' or 'has promised to marry.' Cf n119 above.
- 150 The Second Order of St Francis, the nuns
- 151 The same illustration is found in *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1185B.
- 152 In this example she has not taken a solemn vow to enter a religious order but only a simple vow, in the presence of a few relatives 'at home.' As Erasmus remarks elsewhere, that is not the same thing as taking a solemn vow, with certain rites, in a church. But whether public or private (*absque ceremoniis*), uncertainties remained. Erasmus questions whether rigid distinctions between 'solemn' and 'simple' were realistic and just. These and other perplexities are treated at length in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 634B–637B, 647A–648B.
- 153 It would not. See 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 291:26–7 and n44.
- 154 By a solemn vow accepted by the church. She could do so when she reached the age of sixteen. See 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' n8.
- 155 On these and related topics of Christian marriage and monasticism see the introductions and texts of 'Courtship,' 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage,' 'The Repentant Girl,' 'Marriage.' The best exposition of Erasmus' views is *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 615A–714B.
- 156 Matt 19:6
- 157 There are echoes here of Erasmus' accounts of his own entrance into a monastery. See 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' introduction 282–4 and the references given there.
- 158 A legal phrase, *doli capax* (*Digest* 43.4.1) meaning capable or suitable for fraud or deceit, hence sane enough to be responsible for wrongdoing. When the butcher repeats the phrase he makes it passive, applicable to one who is wronged, not one who does wrong.
- 159 At 693:29–694:11
- 160 *Adagia* II iv 38. The phrase comes from the prefatory letter to a poem on *Cupido cruciatus* by Ausonius and is used aptly by Erasmus in his tribute to Albrecht Dürer (*De pronuntiatione* LB I 928E / CWE 26 398–9). See E. Panofsky "'Nebulae in Pariete": Notes on Erasmus' Eulogy on Dürer' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 14 (1965) 34–41.
- 161 On marriage within prohibited degrees of consanguinity and affinity see n65 above.
- 162 According to *Adagia* III iv 44
- 163 Heb 13:17; cf 1 Pet 2:13–14.
- 164 Under pressure of the butcher's questions the fishmonger has shifted his ground, for his assertion here that 'it's the prerogative of the lawmaker to interpret the law' contradicts what he had said at 694:38–9. See n133 above.

- 165 *praepositus*, 'provost' or 'prior' in ecclesiastical usage; here it can signify either a civil or ecclesiastical officer, depending on context.
- 166 Cf n103 above.
- 167 Dairy products such as butter and cheese, as well as meat and eggs, were forbidden on fast days in Lent. Both Fridays and Saturdays and special seasons during the church year were usually meatless days. By Erasmus' time a large part of the year was meatless – by some reckonings about 150 days (*De esu carniū* LB IX 1202D–E; see Lucien Febvre *Life in Renaissance France* trans Marian Rothstein [Cambridge, Mass and London 1977] 127).
- 168 Thomas Aquinas uses these two terms sometimes in comparisons or contrasts. For a few examples see *Summa theologiae* I q 36 art 3; I q 93 art 8; I–II q 96 art 3; II–II q 58 art 7; II–II q 82 art 2; II–II q 85 art 3; II–II q 123 art 3; II–II q 129 art 1.
- 169 They must be respected as they deserve. In administering the sacraments they have the same power the apostles had, but we are not obligated to give the same weight to their words that we give to the apostles' writings, which it is forbidden to doubt (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1090C; *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1178F). See also n254 below.
- 170 See 690:7–19 and notes above.
- 171 *pomeria*; see *Adagia* III vi 46. On the literal meaning of *pomerium* see Gellius 13.14.1–7.
- 172 Cf Allen Ep 1744:17–25; some examples in *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 951D. In principle the church has always insisted on the distinction between unalterable (divine) and changeable (human) law. For other examples see R.C. Mortimer *Western Canon Law* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1953) chapter 5.
- 173 The 'vote' could not change anything but reminded the people of their obligations. After the Ten Commandments were received by Moses and the book of the covenant read to them, the Israelites promised to obey them, thus in a sense ratifying the law that both they and Moses knew would stand, since it was divinely ordained (Exod 24:7–8).
- 174 The Sorbonne criticized these lines ('Finally . . . no longer') as confusing the church's ordinances with the old Mosaic law (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 952B–C). The general question here is whether time-honoured constitutions, even the Mosaic laws, though they may have the character of precepts, can or should ever give way to a higher ethic. Christ's implicit approval of David's eating the sacred bread and his pronouncement that the sabbath is made for man and not man for the sabbath (692:30–1, 694:30–1 above) provide the answer. See *Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 106F–107B.
- 175 Those in which absolution for certain sins must be granted by higher authority (pope, bishop, or head of an order) instead of by an ordinary confessor. The Council of Trent restated the established rules (session 14 [1551] Teaching concerning . . . penance, chapter 7 and Canons concerning . . . penance, canon 11; Tanner II 708 and 713, with the notes). Cf *Exomologesis* LB V 157F–158A.
- 176 Horace *Epistles* 2.1.116, quoted in *Adagia* I vi 15. The next adage, 'Let the cobbler stick to his last,' is a more common proverb with the same meaning.
- 177 These words are quoted with approval by Erasmus in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1108:21–5. What is said here is defended in *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 952A–B. Cf Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* II 908–10.

- 178 A main subject in the examination of scriptural texts in 'The Godly Feast' (see especially 185:31–186:7, 196:11–39) and earlier in *Enchiridion*. See also Ep 1202 and C.A.L. Jarrott on this theme in Erasmus' *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum*, 'Erasmus' Biblical Humanism' *Studies in the Renaissance* 17 (1970) 140–9.
- 179 Rom 14:17; Gal 3:23–6, 4:3–9; see Erasmus' note on Gal 4:7–8 in LB VI 817D–E. Erasmus' Paraphrases on Romans and Galatians as well as his Annotations should be consulted. These Paraphrases are translated in CWE 42, the Annotations on Romans in CWE 56. Erasmus translated Chrysostom's commentary on Galatians 3–5 (LB VIII 294–313). Chapters 7 and 8–10 of 1 Corinthians are also basic texts (see 'The Godly Feast' 189:37–191:41). On Erasmus as interpreter of Paul see John B. Payne 'Erasmus: Interpreter of Romans' in *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies* ed Carl S. Meyer 2 (1971) 1–35 and 'Erasmus and Lefèvre d'Etaples as Interpreters of Paul' ARG 65 (1974) 54–82.
- 180 2 Cor 3:12–14
- 181 'The religion of Christians today does not depend on miracles,' but we should firmly believe those recorded in Scripture (Allen Ep 2037:85–9, written to bishop Longland in 1528). In *Ecclesiastes* (1535) Erasmus says faith has supplanted miracles, as Scripture supplanted the oracles (LB V 825B).
- 182 Cornelius the centurion, a devout man who 'prayed to God always,' was told in a vision to seek St Peter. He did so and consequently was converted, with his household, to Christianity (Acts 10).
- 183 Ps 36:3 (35:4 Vulg)
- 184 Guillaume Farel, who studied in Paris with Lefèvre d'Etaples and later joined the reformers; in 1523 he went to Basel, where he knew Erasmus. They did not get along well, and as Farel's views became more extreme his differences with Erasmus and his rash temperament led to an irreconcilable breach. Some years later he was a prominent preacher and agitator in Bern, then was active with Calvin in Geneva. When both were expelled from Geneva (1538), Farel went to Neuchâtel, where he died in 1565. He was a zealot who did not suffer fools – all who opposed him – gladly. Erasmus was content to see the last of him after the hostile encounter in 1524 (Ep 1510).
- 185 'Inspid,' 'stupid'; *Adagia* II iv 72. Since the noun *blitum* or *blitus* means 'beet,' identification of Bliteus with Béda (Bédier), Erasmus' relentless critic in Paris, is certain. On Béda see 'Patterns' n35; for his criticisms of Erasmus *Supputatio* LB IX 441–720.
- 186 Jacobus Latomus (Jacques Masson), d 1544; academic theologian at Louvain. Luther considered him the best of those who had written against him and thought him superior to Erasmus (WA *Tischreden* 2 no 1709). Latomus' *De trium linguarum et studii theologici ratione* (1519) attacked what he regarded as Erasmus' excessive emphasis on linguistic studies. Erasmus replied with an eloquent *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* (LB IX 79B–106E). On Erasmus' differences with Latomus see additionally G. Chantraine 'L'Apologia ad Latomum' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 51–75. They were differences between a champion of grammar (in the comprehensive sense of that term) and a defender of dialectic. Both men had been at the Collège de Montaigu under Standonck (on whom see n287 below).

Latomus' nickname means 'lame in both feet.' His enemies said that he sprained both ankles when fleeing after being taken in adultery. This story is found in a contemporary *Dialogus bilinguium et trilinguium* by Konrad or Wilhelm Nesen (Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 220:354–221:356 / CWE 7 344). Erasmus was thought by some to have had a hand in writing or revising the dialogue. On the authorship see Allen Ep 1061:505n and the introductions to Ferguson's Latin text and to the English translation in CWE 7.

- 187 'Blear-eyed'; Nicolaas Baechem (Egmondanus), prior of the Carmelites at Louvain and another detractor of Erasmus' New Testament and the *Colloquies*. See 'Rash Vows' n14.
- 188 Wolfgang Capito (Köpfel), d 1541, who admired both Luther and Erasmus, was a leader of reform in Strasbourg at the time this colloquy was published. Erasmus had known him in Basel and praised him (Allen Ep 456:169–74 / CWE Ep 456:187–93) before Capito joined the reformers and moved to Strasbourg in 1523. They continued to correspond, but relations cooled after Capito's conversion to the 'new gospel' or 'new church' church, as Erasmus terms it (Allen Epp 1459:61, 1482:16 / CWE Epp 1477B:72, 1482:19). Although, in this colloquy, Capito is included with other misguided or hostile men, he is not dismissed as ignorant. On him and his work see James A. Kittelson *Wolfgang Capito: From Humanist to Reformer* (Leiden 1975), 'Capito and Erasmus' *Erasmus in English* 11 (1981–2) 12–19, and the article in CEBR.
- 189 *rabinum*. Like *magister*, this title often had sarcastic or contemptuous connotations; see 'Military Affaris' n17, and cf 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n69.
- 190 *Adagia* I ix 29; the phrase is 'appropriate either for those who sentence and punish very severely or those who settle disputes and doubtful controversies with great speed' (CWE 32 197–8). See also *Adagia* IV i 6 and IV i 7. Erasmus alludes aptly to this proverbial phrase when protesting the heavy-handedness of Bêda and other critics (Allen Ep 1581:553–69).
- 191 See 677:22–3 above.
- 192 This sentence displeased the Paris critics (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 952B–D). Cf n174 above.
- 193 *Adagia* I viii 6
- 194 *Adagia* I iii 81
- 195 Scylla was a monster in the straits of Messina that seized and devoured sailors; Charybdis a whirlpool opposite. To be 'between Scylla and Charybdis' was to be in equal peril no matter which course one took (*Adagia* I v 4).
- 196 The name, Greek in origin, means 'overseer,' 'guardian'; metaphorically 'shepherd' in Christian usage.
- 197 Apparently this passage was misunderstood by one critic, Alberto Pio (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1178F).
- 198 Erasmus defends this paragraph in *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 952E–F.
- 199 A violation of clerical decorum. Those who had long hair (*comam nutriunt*; 1 Cor 11:14 Vulg) were censured as early as 506 by canon 20 of the Council of Agde (Mansi [n96 above] 8 328). The bishop of Basel in 1503 rebuked clerics who 'have not been ashamed to let their hair grow too long' (J.M. Vincent *Switzerland at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century* Johns Hopkins University Studies in History and Political Science 22 no 5 [Baltimore 1904] 56, and see next note).

The Fifth Lateran Council in 1514 forbade clerics in cardinals' households to cultivate long hair or beards ([Bull on reform of the curia] On cardinals; Tanner 1 619).

- 200 Cf 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 477:21–3. Statutes of the Synod of Basel (1503) contain many specific regulations of clerical dress. Canons must not go to market in choir dress during divine service to buy eggs or cheese. Whether in church or out, they must wear clothing suitable to their profession: no silk, no swords or daggers, no extravagant collars, no rings, no long hair (text in *Quellenbuch zur Schweizergeschichte* ed W. Oechsli [Zürich 1886–93] II 373ff; translation in *Vincent Switzerland* [see preceding note] 55–8).
- 201 Cf *Ecclesiastes* LB v 1025B. Adultery was a more heinous sin than 'simple' fornication (see n112 above) or concubinage, as it was a violation of the sacrament of marriage (as well as a personal sin), hence a sacrilege. On clerical concubinage see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n6.
- 202 See 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' n26.
- 203 Usury was forbidden to clergy as early as the First Council of Nicaea in 325 (canon 17; Tanner I 14).
- 204 Sale or purchase of ecclesiastical office; so called from the original culprit, Simon Magus; see Acts 8:9–24. Always denounced, this evil was widespread and apparently impossible to eliminate. 'What was a crime then is custom now' (*Enarratio in psalmum xxii* LB v 331B). Avarice and debauchery, the main vices of priests, begot simony, which is now, Erasmus charges, almost a joke (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 791D).
- 205 *Exomologesis* (1524) contains a similar passage (LB v 163F–164A). Cf Allen Ep 447:613–22 / *CWE* Ep 447 679–89, the letter to 'Grunnius.'
- 206 Cf Allen Ep 1353:173–6 / *CWE* Ep 1353:195–9: 'No one who sees a Carthusian the worse for drink thinks he has committed a crime. But if the same Carthusian tasted meat, he deserved perpetual imprisonment.' On the Carthusians, see the introduction to 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 328–9.
- 207 The knotted cord of the Franciscans was customary long before the time of Erasmus, by Francis' example or desire. When describing Francis as the saint appeared to him in a dream, Erasmus was pleased to report that his cord was unknotted: another superstition exposed! (Allen Ep 1700:47–8). Franciscan dress receives attention in 'The Seraphic Funeral'; on Ep 1700 see n17 there.
- 208 Augustinian monks wore leather girdles. See Allen Ep 2088:91–8.
- 209 Carmelites wore belts.
- 210 One of the Knights of Rhodes or Knights Hospitallers or Knights of Malta, whose specialty was protection of pilgrims and crusaders. They fought against the Turks in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
- 211 St Francis and the earliest Franciscans went barefoot; later ones wore sandals. The common term 'discalced' when used of Franciscans or Carmelites is ambiguous, since it does not indicate whether the persons to whom it is applied are barefoot or wear sandals; but it does mean they do not wear shoes. See also 'The Sermon' n14; 'The Seraphic Funeral' n76.
- 212 See 'The Old Men's Chat' n70.
- 213 Make an uproar; *Adagia* IV iv 73. With the phrase compare *De esu carnum* LB IX 1202B. The religious orders had firm and zealously defended traditions about their origins, rules, and dress, but as with many other sodalities, sacred or

secular, the known facts do not always support cherished beliefs about ancient origins. Erasmus is typically impatient with fastidiousness about costume; for instance in Allen Ep 447:497–521 / CWE Ep 447:546–74, written in 1516 but not printed until 1529. Another example occurs in *Moriae encomium* LB IV 471A–473B / ASD IV-3 158:524–160:556 / CWE 27 131. On Erasmus' own experiences with clerical dress see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n97.

214 Cf 'Courtship' 258:16–17 and 720:16 below.

215 Cf the anecdote in a letter of c April 1524 (Allen Ep 1436:100–4 / CWE Ep 1436:110–13). It may be compared with his experience in Italy (Ep 447:470–96 / CWE Ep 447:514–45). See also 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n97.

216 Literally 'much-revering,' of one who observes religious restrictions conscientiously; *threscus* is a transliteration of a word in James 1:26. If Erasmus has a specific contemporary in mind here, we do not know who he was.

217 These too were banned during fasts; see n167 above. But because of gradual alleviations, exceptions, and local customs, it is sometimes difficult to be certain about fasting at a particular time and place.

218 Other examples of such conduct are found in 'The Liar and the Man of Honour' 346:28–347:41.

219 That is, on Friday, the day before Passover, on which Jesus was crucified. To Dominican and Franciscan friars, the most active preachers in the late medieval church, Lent afforded an unsurpassed opportunity to move their hearers by eloquence and, as here, by *exempla* that would win and hold their attention. On methods and techniques of preaching see A.J. Krailsheimer *Rabelais and the Franciscans* (Oxford 1963). The principal exposition of Erasmus' ideas on preaching is *Ecclesiastes* (1535), already cited many times in these pages; but see too 'Youth' n48, 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n46, and 'The Sermon.' He recalls some downright silly sermons, as any habitual auditor can do (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 1031F–1032B, 1041C–1043A), and – like Folly (LB IV 475A–479D / ASD IV-3 162:587–168:696 / CWE 27 133–5) – he knew all the tricks of the trade, but was pained by excesses and bad taste, just as he was constantly annoyed by church music (on this see 'A Pilgrimage' n161). Inordinately long sermons could be trying. He says he heard a Parisian divine extend a sermon on the prodigal son throughout Lent (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 1042C–D). 'Passion sermons eight hours long' were one of the Roman church's customs condemned by Luther as unnecessary (*Vermahnung an die Geistlichen . . . zu Augsburg* [1530] WA 30 part 2 350 / LW 34 55). Oecolampadius, Erasmus' fellow theologian in Basel, wrote a tract *De risu paschali* (Basel 1518) on making Easter enjoyable; see Allen Ep 1111:58n. In *Ecclesiastes* Erasmus writes interestingly on the preacher as actor and the contrasts between good preaching and foolish or extravagant discourse (LB v 845D–847A, 859E–861E). There is an analysis of sermons, a form of discourse to which Erasmus gave much attention, in Chomarat's *Grammaire et rhétorique* II 1053–1154. On Roberto Caracciolo's preaching and Erasmus' interest in him see Moorman 522 and E.V. Telle 'En marge de l'éloquence sacrée aux xv^e–xvi^e siècles: Erasme et fra Roberto Caracciolo' BHR 43 (1981) 449–70.

When he was a boy, Erasmus tells us, he heard the story of the nun told in the vernacular by a Dominican to rouse a sleepy congregation (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 861B–C). Anecdotes of this type, similar in most essentials, were current, for example in Heinrich Bebel's *Facetiae* (Tübingen 1506; see the edition by

- G. Bebermeyer [Leipzig 1931] 65 nos 57, 58) and *More Latin Epigrams* 71, 191–2 no 149; see also Johannes Pauli *Schimpf und Ernst* (1519) ed Johannes Bolte (Berlin 1924) II 412 no 716. The most notable version of the story is that by Rabelais (1546) in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* 3.19. It is longer than Erasmus' and has a different ending, for the nun, immediately after the episode, confesses herself to the friar. He enjoins her, *sub poena*, not to divulge what had happened, and so she could not. Whether Rabelais borrowed at least the main part of the tale from Erasmus or from another source is not known. On these and later versions see V.L. Saulnier 'Histoire d'un conte rabelaisien: la nonne surprise et le devoir de silence (Tiers livre, XIX)' *BHR* 24 (1962) 545–58.
- 220 The Latin terms in this passage refer to the 'bases' or 'positions' in forensic rhetoric. Quintilian's analysis of *status* is long and complex. In 3.6.44 he cites Cicero (*Orator* 14.45) on the fundamental questions to be asked in any case – Was the deed done? What was done? What was the nature of the deed? – and Cicero remains his authority when he reviews methods of defence (3.6.80–4). The defendant's first position (*status conjecturalis*) is to deny the charge. The second defence (*status definitivus*) is to say that the deed was not committed. The third line of defence (*status qualitatis*) is to maintain that the act was justifiable. The last resort is to try to evade the charge on a point of law, to claim for example that the charge is brought illegally; under this heading Quintilian places questions of competence (or [*status*] *translationis*). Erasmus' summary in *Ecclesiastes* LB v 892f lists the *status* in a slightly different order and gives alternative names for each: '... an sit factum quod obicitur, quale sit et quid sit. Primus ... dicitur conjecturalis, sive inficialis, secundus qualitatis, sive juridicalis, tertius finis, sive definitivus.' The nun in the story told here has no grounds for *status conjecturalis* or *inficialis*, since 'the evidence was inescapable.' She adopts the *status qualitatis* (which in Quintilian may be taken to include the *status translationis*) – 'I was overcome,' and 'I would have [screamed] ... but there's a strict rule against making noise in the dorter.' In Allen Ep 2164:1–4 Erasmus defines *status translativus* as 'acknowledging the deed – since it is undeniable – in such a way as to blame it on someone else.'
- 221 Cf 'A Pilgrimage' n165 above.
- 222 Since the Benedictine Rule (chapter 39) prohibited the eating of the flesh of quadrupeds, this is an ironic way of saying that when the prior was not in the abbey he did not keep the rules.
- 223 These visits may be a sign of his lechery also. See 'Inns' n20.
- 224 See n258 below.
- 225 A strong passage in *Ecclesiastes* argues that the requirement of obedience to human ordinances is sometimes carried to such length that it obscures the higher obedience owed to God (LB v 1023E–F). Cf Allen Ep 1353:138–59 / *CWE* Ep 1353:155–78.
- 226 *Adagia* I i 35
- 227 Vespers were recited in the afternoon, but during Lent in the morning.
- 228 Jerome, in a famous letter to Eustochium, who wished to become a nun, warns against the insidious evils of wine: 'The spouse of Christ should avoid wine as though poison' (Ep 22.8 PL 22 399).
- 229 Leo of Rozmítal was once invited to a convent at Neuss near Düsseldorf as the guest of the mother superior, who 'gave a fine dance in the nunnery. The nuns

were very finely dressed and knew all the best dances' (*Travels* 23–4). We hear of two English nuns who spent an evening 'in dancing and playing the lute with friars' (A. Hamilton Thompson *The English Clergy and Their Organisation in the Later Middle Ages* [Oxford 1947] 172). Charitas Pirckheimer, a sister of Erasmus' friend Willibald Pirckheimer, played the dulcimer while nuns danced at the celebration of her jubilee as an abbess (Franz Binder *Charitas Pirckheimer* [Frieberg 1878] 187, 189; *Charitas Pirckheimer Quellensammlung III: Briefe* ed J. Pfanner [Landshut 1966] 241:29ff. On nuns and dancing in Italy see E. Rodocanachi *La femme italienne ... pendant la Renaissance* (Paris 1922) 208. Roger Ascham saw nuns dancing at a wedding during his journey to Augsburg in 1551 (*The Whole Works of Roger Ascham* ed J.A. Giles, 3 vols [1864–5; repr New York 1965] 1 part 2 249). We hear of priests dancing in Krailsheimer *Rabelais and the Franciscans* (n219 above) 57. In Basel dancing was forbidden even to the laity as late as 1519 (Vincent *Switzerland* [n199 above] 26) and in due time by Calvin in Geneva. See Kidd *Documents* 558 no 20 (22), 583 no 295 (14), 637 no 311, 640 no 312.

- 230 *lascivi lusus*. The same phrase is used in Allen Ep 1233:107, where Erasmus speaks of the perils to chastity in such games. Love of literature and of study, so notable in the More daughters, are safeguards. See 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' n16.
- 231 Cf the account of the prior and his brethren in 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' and 'The Repentant Girl.'
- 232 This narrative follows fairly closely what Erasmus had written in a letter to Udalricus Zasius in March 1523 (Allen Ep 1353:160–76 / CWE Ep 1353:179–99), shortly after visiting him in Freiburg. It is the first of three passages in this dialogue containing precious autobiographical testimony – conveyed through fiction but authentic nonetheless – recalling experiences important to Erasmus.
- 233 Cf 694:23–31 above. The same example of the deleterious effects of feast days is used in Allen Ep 1039:180–6 / CWE Ep 1039:190–6 (written in 1519) and *De concordia* (1533) LB V 504D–E.
- 234 The distinction is characteristic. Erasmus deplored and often criticized unneeded and harmful human ordinances but did not advocate open disobedience. He hoped to persuade, not incite, and like most of his contemporaries had a horror of sedition.
- 235 Allen Ep 1353:160n says Passion Sunday, but since every Sunday was a 'day of obligation' this orgy was unusually disgraceful. Erasmus' account, dated Monday, 23 March 1523, says the affair occurred 'yesterday' (Allen Ep 1353:160 / CWE Ep 1353:179).
- 236 A staff, encircled by ivy and vine leaves, carried by Bacchus and his company
- 237 A satyr, elderly and usually drunken; companion of Dionysus (Bacchus). For one of the many contemporary representations in art see Dürer's *Bacchanal with Silenus*. The vivid description of the man 'playing the part of Silenus' and 'carried head down to prevent his choking with vomit' resembles a similar description in Clement of Alexandria *Paedagogus* 2.2; but Erasmus seems not to have known Clement. In 'The Epicurean' he is called 'comic Silenus' (1086:32–3).

On another level than art or mythology, however, the name 'Silenus' signified for Erasmus something very different and more profound than a satyr. Beneath the outward and visible appearances lies an ethical and Christian meaning,

if one has eyes to perceive it. So Erasmus writes in an essay on 'The Sileni of Alcibiades,' first published in the 1515 edition of the *Adagia* (III iii 1) and later printed separately. The title was a proverbial expression for something that seems at first absurd and contemptible but when scrutinized more closely proves to be worthy, beautiful, glorious.

- 238 *Adagia* I vi 45. Sermons with ribald stories to entertain rather than edify and shameful 'bacchanalian revels' on Palm Sunday (or during Lent; see 714:8–1 below) were aspects of carnival or folk culture (like the Feast of Fools and institution of Boy Bishop), enjoyed and defended by the commons though strongly opposed by many churchmen and reformers. Erasmus witnessed a mock bullfight in a carnival at Siena in 1509. He condemns the spectacle and the behaviour of the people as unchristian and pagan (*Supputatio* LB IX 516C–517A; *Enarratio in psalmum xxxviii* LB V 458F), and he thought the same about the real bullfight he saw in that year in the courtyard of Julius II's palace (Allen Ep 3032:417–33). On the conflict between carnival and Lent see the chapter on 'The Triumph of Lent' in Peter Burke *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York 1978) 207–43.
- 239 Also in *De esu carniū* LB IX 1202A–B, 1212A, 1213D; Allen Ep 2037:78–80
- 240 On the profanation of the Lord's day by debauchery see *Exomologesis* LB V 162F–163A; similarly Allen Ep 1353:153–5 / CWE Ep 1353:170–3. Nowadays too many Christians use holy days as occasions for drinking bouts and worse (*Adagia* II vi 12).
- 241 Similar assertions about the mending of shoes on Sunday being a 'capital crime' are made in *Moriae encomium* LB IV 465B / ASD IV-3 148:411–414 / CWE 27 127. The sabbath was made for man, yet those and other holy days are burdensome upon workers who ought and wish to work to support their families. Fish days do not help the poor, who can afford neither fish nor flesh. The difficulty about not working on Sunday and yet having to support one's family was not new. The master-general of the Dominican order in 1274 advised Pope Gregory x that men should not be compelled to keep new feast days 'beyond the authority of the Roman church; and that except on major feast days instituted by the church, men who needed to work to feed their families should be permitted to do so after divine service' (Mansi [n96 above] 24 130).
- 242 This next part of the dialogue conveys accurately Erasmus' convictions and prejudices about compulsory fasting. That his two speakers exaggerate now and then is true enough, for as literary creations with personalities of their own they do more than merely parrot Erasmus' opinions. But Erasmus often repeats and defends the substance of what is said here. The entire passage may be compared profitably with what he wrote earlier in 'The Profane Feast,' first printed in the March 1522 edition of the *Colloquia* (see 143:15–146:5), and 'The Godly Feast' (188:8–191:37). His own aversion to fish made meatless days unpleasant. For the failure of the church to be more moderate about fasting he blames the bishops rather than the popes (see *De esu carniū* LB IX 1204C–1209D). He takes pains to stress that his quarrel is not with *publicas ecclesiae constitutiones* but with those imposed by some bishops and their officers ('In epistolam . . . de delectu ciborum . . . scholia' no 8 in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 603 / ASD IX-1 68:98–107; on the publication of the *scholia* see n263 below). To tell someone that relief from the rules could be obtained from pope or bishop is a waste of time, for ordinary people must deal with their parish priest, who

acts for the bishop, administers the sacraments, hears confessions, and grants absolution or imposes penalties (LB IX 1203D–F). But the people believe the pope alone can alleviate rules of fasting.

- 243 'Fasting' and 'abstinence' are distinct yet closely related terms. Both denote avoidance of food, but Erasmus emphasizes the difference between fasting as total abstention from all food on occasion or for a time and discrimination or 'selection of food.' Fasting was thought to have scriptural warrant as 'a divine precept, or almost a divine precept' (see Acts 13:2, 14:23). Yet, as Erasmus points out elsewhere, neither Christ nor Paul ordained fasting (Allen Ep 858:458–64 / CWE Ep 858:484–91). Selection of foods, eating some and avoiding others, for instance eating fish on Fridays, involves what Erasmus considers a presumptuous judgment, for decrees, enforcement, and penalties concerning such regulations are made by men, not required by Scripture. They are in fact counsels at best.

Very soon after Easter 1522 Erasmus wrote *De esu carniū*, which was printed in August (English translation c 1530; STC 10489). This essay, addressed to Christoph von Utenheim, bishop of Basel and a supporter of reform, is the best non-dramatic presentation of his views on fasting and the institution of meatless days, a reasoned indictment of the situation and a powerful plea for change. In part at least *De esu carniū* was prompted by a recent and notorious violation of fasting laws in Basel; on that affair see 'The Godly Feast' n157 and n263 below. He wanted to help the culprit, Steinschnider, if he could; the more so, apparently, because he himself was now looked upon with suspicion by some in Basel. He does not excuse ostentatious or contumacious disobedience of laws of fasting. Indeed fasting has positive values, moral and physical (*De esu carniū* LB IX 1197E–1198A). But to attach unreasonable and severe penalties to ordinances and to ignore the arguments for mitigating them is injurious and unjust. Allowances for individuals' circumstances ought to be made. He himself has eaten flesh in private on fast days, he concedes, but only because of extreme necessity of health and because he had a papal dispensation to do so (LB IX 1212B–1213E; and see n271 in this colloquy). Above all, Christian charity, in the spirit of Pauline liberty, ought to govern religious discipline. (Compare his response to criticism by Spanish monks and his opponents in Paris (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1089A–D; *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 831E–834C). A reader who turns to 'A Fish Diet' after examining *De esu carniū* will see that the dialogue includes the same topics and many of the same arguments, even some of the same phrases and illustrations. Clearly Erasmus wrote the dialogue with *De esu carniū* (1522) before him or in mind. In an attack on Protestants in 1529 Erasmus says the net result of their efforts was that the Roman church became more restrictive than it had been. Formerly no one troubled much about somebody's eating flesh in private, whereas now whoever tastes an egg in Lent for the sake of his health is in danger of capital punishment (*Epistola contra pseudevangelicos* [1529 or 1530] LB X 1583C / ASD IX-1 301:508–10). His rhetoric here is overwrought, but the entire passage of which this is part (LB X 1582E–1587D / ASD IX-1 300:472–309:723) is a good example of his bitter disappointment with the more radical reformers. By going too far they had only made matters worse for Catholics.

- 244 Particularly Paul; see 'The Godly Feast' 189:35–191:37.

- 245 1 Tim 4:34
- 246 See the account of Eros' visit to Freiburg 713:18–714:8 below.
- 247 Foreigners comment on the English fondness for eating – and sometimes overeating – and the abundance of their food. So *A Relation of England* (c 1500) 21, 23. That the English ate a supper every other day in Lent is repeated in Erasmus' *scholia* on *De esu carnum* no 52 (*Scrinium Erasmianum* II 617 / ASD IX-1 86:604–5). The testimony of More confirms the English custom of taking a more lenient view of Lenten diet than was usual in other lands (*Apology* chapter 31; Yale CWM 9 106).
- 248 A topic to which Erasmus often adverts. See 'The Profane Feast' n58.
- 249 *pila* refers to more than one kind of game. On preaching see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n46. For Christians, church attendance was not an option. From the fifth or at latest sixth century, attendance at the Sunday Eucharist was not only expected but became mandatory, as is clearly implied in canon 47 of the Council of Agde (506), which ruled that people at Sunday mass must stay until the benediction or suffer public rebuke by the bishop (Mansi [n96 above] 8 332). In the context of the council such a rule is intelligible only if there was an antecedent assumption that the faithful must attend mass on Sundays. This standard had the force of law in the religious life of those people, not only for Sunday but for other holy days of obligation. See Gratian *Decretum* part 3 *De cons* D 1 c 62, 64 (Friedberg I 1311–12 / PL 187 1727–8). As early as the Hispana Canons of the sixth–seventh centuries, Christians were forbidden to leave church during the sermon; and going to games instead of divine service could bring excommunication (R.C. Mortimer *Western Canon Law* [Berkeley and Los Angeles 1953] 21–2).
- 250 Erasmus tells of a priest who, fasting in the evening before he was to say mass, had tasted some sugar. Next day, when robed for mass, he happened to become aware of a sweet taste in his mouth. Horrified, he sought Erasmus and asked if he should sacrifice. 'I laughed at his silliness and told him to put his mind at rest and say mass' (*Exomologesis* LB V 158C–D). Some misguided religious prize 'sacred obedience' so highly that their immoral lives are of less concern to them than obedience to superiors (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 1023F–1024A).
- 251 The Eucharistic bread, or host
- 252 1 Cor 6:19. Cf *Exomologesis* 163F–164A; *Apologia qua respondet invecivis Lei* in Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 293:1436–1445; *Lingua* LB IV 740A–D / ASD IV-1A 159:411–160:437 / CWE 29 392–3. Passages similar to this exchange occur in Luther; see the fifth of his eight Wittenberg sermons (1522) WA 10 part 3 40:1–43:6 / LW 51 88–9; *Confitendi ratio* (1520) WA 6 164:35–165:26 / LW 39 38–9; *De capitivitate Babylonica ecclesiae* (1520) WA 6 517:16–21 / LW 36 43.
- 253 Defects of birth or body, technically 'irregularities,' were loosely defined, and papal dispensations could be sought to waive some of them, as was done from time to time in the early church. For instance, the so-called *Apostolic Constitutions* (fourth century), canons 77–8, allow one-eyed and maimed men to become bishops, but not deaf or blind men (William Whiston's translation rev by James Donaldson, Ante-Nicene Christian Library 17 part 2 [Edinburgh 1870] 267). On a puzzling passage in 2 Sam 5:6–8, 'the blind and the lame shall not come into the house,' see *Adagia* IV v 47. Legislation was indeed 'human,' but the stated prohibitions rested upon explicit Mosaic law. Men blind or

lame or bastard were barred from the Hebrew priesthood (Lev 21:16–23; Deut 23:2). Erasmus himself was illegitimate but was allowed by his superiors to be ordained to the priesthood (Allen Ep 517:7–12 / CWE Ep 517:8–14). See Epp 187A (in Allen III xxix–xxx) and 517 and the introductions to these documents in CWE. When writing of physical handicaps to ordination Erasmus may have been thinking also of the famous case of Origen who, taking Matt 19:12 literally, castrated himself. Referring to this event in his biographical sketch of Origen, Erasmus comments that while such physical mutilation makes ordination prohibitive, authorities ought to be more vigilant to prevent those who are morally and spiritually defective from being ordained (*Vita Origenis* LB VIII 428A–B). The source of the account of Origen's self-mutilation is Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* 6.8.1–5. In an ironical passage of *Julius exclusus* the pope says that among numerous and stringent reforms suggested – by others – for the Council of Pisa was the castration of criminous priests (*Erasmi opuscula* 100:654–5 / CWE 27 183).

In his *scholia* on Jerome's letters (in the revised edition of his Jerome [Basel: Froben 1524–6] III 65–6), Erasmus attributed the constitution forbidding men with bodily defects to be admitted to clerical orders to Pope Anastasius I (399–401), who feared that otherwise defective men would be dedicated to the church and the whole ones to secular life.

- 254 People do not exist for the sake of bishops but bishops for the sake of people (*De esu carniū* LB IX 1207F). Bishops are to be heard, Erasmus says, if they teach what is worthy of Christ and if their own lives so shine before men that they are lanterns leading to Christ. Even their wrongdoings must be borne – if they do not cause us to do wrong (*Apologiae contra Stunicam* LB IX 369A).
- 255 The urgency of preaching by bishops was often voiced; for instance by Jean Gerson, the chancellor of Paris named a few lines later by the fishmonger. He emphasized preaching in *De officio pastoris*, a sermon of 1408 to the synod of Rheims (*Oeuvres* v 123–33 no 215). The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) had ruled that bishops unable, for good reasons (other duties or physical infirmities) or bad (lack of learning), to preach must provide suitable men to do it for them (constitution 10, On appointing preachers; Tanner I 239–40). The Council of Trent found it still necessary to remind prelates that they were 'personally bound' to preach unless a legitimate impediment prevented (session 5 [1546] Decree on instruction and preaching, nos 9–10, session 24 [1563] Decree on reform, canon 4; Tanner II 669, 763). Erasmus touches upon these and related themes in many writings, including a long passage in *Ecclesiastes* LB v 801C–818D. See also 'Things and Names' 811:5–6 and n6.
- 256 Festivals were movable (Easter) or fixed (Christmas). All Sundays were feast days; see nn240 and 241 above. Latomus rebuked Erasmus for suggesting in *De concordia* (1533) that since bishops and popes have introduced so many unnecessary feast days – for example those celebrating the Immaculate Conception of Mary, her nativity, and her presentation in the temple – they could just as easily abolish them. It would be better to have no solemn feast days except those for which there is a clear basis in Scripture (*De concordia* LB v 504D–F). Granted, replies Latomus, Scripture says nothing about those events, but tradition, approval by theologians, and the disciplinary and spiritual profit they provide fully justify such feast days (*Opera* [Louvain 1550] 180–1). The

same reasons justify the church's rules about fasting and abstinence from the eating of flesh (*Opera* 181–2). Erasmus disagreed. 'I don't know why the bishops constantly add holy days to holy days,' when it would be more prudent to reduce the number. To true Christians every day is holy; to bad ones holy days are not holy but profane (*Adagia* II vi 12 LB II 587A–B; cf *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1154C–1155A, 1199F; Allen Ep 1039:180–96 / CWE Ep 1039:190–209). The plethora of religious festivals and the prevalence of superstitious practices are named in almost the same breath as misfortunes; obviously they are related in his mind (Allen Ep 2037:82–9, written to bishop Longland in 1528).

A useful history of holidays, with evidence drawn from many sources, is Edith C. Rodgers' *Discussion of Holidays in the Later Middle Ages* (New York 1940).

- 257 What is said in the following lines about 'special physical conditions' and confidence that papal regulations were not meant to cause unbearable hardships for those who needed exemption is both tactful and sincere. The same arguments appear earlier (1522) in 'The Profane Feast' 144:26–40; *De esu carniū* (1522) LB IX 1204C; Allen Ep 1353:45–55 / CWE Ep 1353:53–63 (1523); later in *De concordia* (1533) LB V 504E–F.
- 258 In his *De non esu carniū* (1401) Gerson writes that custom or the constitution of the universal church forbidding the eating of flesh need not be observed in clear cases of extreme necessity. Nor could one escape blame for homicide if, by eating meat, he could save a life yet willingly allowed himself or another person to die by fasting. To Gerson as to Erasmus in the colloquy, the crucial question is whether the ordinance on fasting is a divine commandment or a 'purely human ordinance'; we know that 'thou shalt not kill' is a divine law (*Oeuores* III 80–1 no 93). On Gerson see 'The Shipwreck' n43. Luther is reported to have claimed Gerson as a precursor – without knowing it – of the Reformation (WA *Tischreden* 5 no 5523).
- 259 *paraphronesi*, transliterated from a Greek word in the Septuagint text of Zech 12:4
- 260 Under the Mosaic laws the death penalty applied to many offences, including blasphemy, sorcery, adultery, incest, sedition, treason, murder, profanation of the sabbath. The intimate connection in Hebrew society between crimes against the state and violation of religious ordinances was reflected in medieval law, though torture was not allowed in Hebrew law. Erasmus hopes the severity of Old Testament law can be modified by New Testament doctrines of charity, but he takes contumacy and sedition very seriously, as lines 34–6 below show.
- 261 Matt 5:34; see 695:21 and n131 above.
- 262 Matt 5:21–2
- 263 Seditious acts and incitement of public disturbance (*tumultum*) were always serious and often capital offences in the sixteenth century. The case of Sigismund Steinschnider is a gruesome example. Reference was made earlier (n243 above; see also 'The Godly Feast' n157) to this neighbour and acquaintance of Erasmus in Basel. On Palm Sunday 1522 Steinschnider and some boon companions defiantly ate pork without troubling to conceal the fact. Steinschnider was a skilful surgeon but a headstrong individual – perhaps mad, Erasmus suggested later (Allen Ep 1353:183–5 / CWE Ep 1353:206–8 and *scholia* on *De esu carniū* [on which see below in this note] in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 601 / ASD IX-1 66:30–2) – who was evidently his own worst enemy. When

Erasmus wrote *De esu carniū* (printed in August 1522), he tried to protect Steinschnider by saying that his action was 'not *per se* a capital offence,' though deplorable and worrisome – for what would happen next? (LB IX 1197A). What transpired was worse than Erasmus could have foreseen. In February or March 1523 Steinschnider made the fatal mistake, whether irrationally or from sheer bravado, of crossing the border into Alsace, which was imperial territory. There he was promptly seized, charged with both blasphemy and treason, and executed. His death is described by Erasmus, on the basis of presumably reliable reports, in his *scholia* on *De esu carniū*: 'After atrocious tortures the flesh was twice plucked from his back by red-hot tongs. His four extremities together with his hips and shoulder blades were slowly and excruciatingly amputated. His skull was perforated and the tongue pulled out through the incision. Then the central part of his body except the heart was burnt' (*Scrinium Erasmianum* II 601 / ASD IX-1 66:25–8 / trans R.H. Bainton 'Erasmus and the Persecuted' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 202).

These *scholia*, written some years after publication of the August 1522 edition of *De esu carniū*, were issued by Froben in 1532 with the second edition of *De esu carniū*, a reprint of Erasmus' *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas*, *Dilutio* on Josse Clichtove's attack on *Encomium matrimonii*, and his reply to Alberto Pio's criticism. Neither the *scholia* on *De esu carniū* nor the *Dilutio* was reprinted in LB. Consequently they were long unknown or inaccessible to most readers of Erasmus. In his preface to the *scholia* Erasmus says that he was persuaded by the bishop of Basel to publish *De esu carniū* but agreed with reluctance because he was sure he would make enemies – 'and I was not mistaken in that.' The *scholia* repeat, defend, and sometimes elaborate or clarify the arguments presented in *De esu carniū*. They confirm that in 1532 Erasmus had not changed his opinions on fasting and related subjects. The text of the *scholia* is edited by J. Coppens 'In Epistolam Des. Erasmi Roterodami de delectu ciborum ad Christophorum episcopum Basiliensem, scholia eiusdem defensoria' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 599–620 and by C. Augustijn, with introduction, in ASD IX-1 51–89; see also Coppens' article, 'Les scolies d'Erasmus sur l'"Epistola de interdicto esu carniū,"' in *Colloquia Erasmi Turonensia* II 829–36. On Clichtove and the *Dilutio* see the introduction to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 281. On Steinschnider see Allen Ep 1274:14n and CEBR.

- 264 For Erasmus' experience with fasting in Italy during Lent see *De esu carniū* LB IX 1206f, 1212D, and Allen Ep 1353:71–3 / CWE Ep 1353:81–3, Allen Ep 1539:106–14.
- 265 *heminam*, equivalent to a pint
- 266 This paragraph describes Erasmus' visit to Udalricus Zasius in Freiburg in March 1523. Another account is provided in Allen Ep 1353:24–44 / CWE Ep 1353:30–52, but Erasmus did not publish that letter; it was first printed in 1574, though he wrote it very soon after the visit. In it Erasmus writes strongly about fasting (Allen lines 45–239 / CWE lines 53–248), a passage that includes the story of the drunken orgy described earlier in this colloquy at 707:25–708:11 and an allusion to the fate of Steinschnider, on which see n263 above.
- 267 Erasmus. 'Erasmus' (or 'Erasmus') and 'Desiderius' are Greek and Latin equivalents respectively of 'beloved.'

268 Not in all respects, but we learn more about his maladies than about his good health. He boasted in 1530 that he never wore spectacles (Allen Ep 2275:26–8), which is remarkable, considering how much he read and wrote, but no doubt he followed the sensible advice he gave to youth: avoid studying at night and take time to get some daily exercise (Allen Ep 56:55–9 / CWE Ep 56:64–9; *De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 447E / ASD I-2 495:8–12), and when writing, stand up (Allen Ep 820:6–7 / CWE Ep 820:7; paintings of him by Dürer, Holbein, and Metsys show him standing at a writing desk). He survived until seventy, longer than most men of his epoch, yet he was harried and sometimes tormented by illnesses. Much is known about these, thanks to his allusions and sometimes detailed descriptions in letters. Investigations by historians of medicine have contributed careful analyses of his health.

Erasmus had an alarming experience in October 1518 with what may have been bubonic plague (Allen Ep 867:148–247 / CWE Ep 867:156–265). He was a martyr to recurrent fevers, gout or arthritis, and kidney stones; his digestive troubles suggest gallstones too. His worst affliction was renal and vesical calculus, ‘the stone,’ a tyrant ‘far more cruel than any Mezentius or Phalaris’ (Allen Epp 1283:10, 1352:14–15 / CWE Epp 1283:10–11, 1352:17–18). An attack he suffered in July 1522 nearly killed him: ‘Your friend Erasmus,’ he tells a correspondent, ‘is nothing but skin and bone’ (Allen Ep 1302:34–42 / CWE Ep 1302:41–50). Another savage attack and the treatment for it in March 1525 are described in Allen Ep 1558:56–135 / CWE Ep 1558:64–146; others in Allen Epp 1735:1–18, 1759:1–78. Epp 1735 and 1759 are addressed to physicians, inviting advice but without much expectation that they can help. ‘Would that there were only one death! . . . There’s no hope in doctors’ (Allen Ep 2260:320–9). Yet soon afterwards he reports some improvement (Allen Ep 2275:29–31). At various times he attributes his calculus to his habit of standing to write, though he was still doing so in 1533 (Allen Epp 1759:50–67, 2880:34), or to bad wine and beer (Allen Ep 226:5–6 / CWE Ep 226:7–8, Allen Ep 2260:325–6). He dates his first encounter with this affliction from his Venetian days in 1508, when he was working hard on *Adagia* (Allen Ep 1349:2–4 / CWE Ep 1349:2–6; *Adagia* II i 1 LB II 405c). If his account in ‘Penny-Pinching’ of life in the household of Andrea Torresani, father-in-law of Aldo Manuzio, is even partially accurate, his surmise about the consequences of his Venetian diet may be correct. In any event ‘calculus racked him’ (Allen Epp 3049:94–101, 3141:30–8 [Bonifacius Amerbach’s letter written after Erasmus’ death]; cf Craig R. Thompson ‘Erasmus Research in the United States’ *Erasmus in English* 5 [1972] 5 n6). Of many available surveys of medicine in Erasmus’ Europe and of studies of his own health, the most satisfactory are H. Brabant’s *Médecins, malades et maladies de la Renaissance* (Brussels 1966) and his two articles in *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia* 1: ‘Epidémies et médecins au temps d’Erasme’ 515–37 and ‘Erasme, ses maladies et ses médecins’ 539–68. Consult also H.N. Cole ‘Erasmus and His Diseases’ *Journal of the American Medical Association* 148 (1952) 529–31. J.-C. Margolin reviews the subject in ‘Erasme et la médecine’ *Res publica litterarum: Studies in the Classical Tradition* (University of Kansas) 2 (1979) 187–205. See also Evert Dirk Baumann *Medisch-historische Studiën over Des. Erasmus* *Etudes médico-historiques sur Erasme* (Arnhem 1953); Peter Krivatsy ‘Erasmus’ Medical Milieu’ *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 47 (1973) 113–54.

- A notion that Erasmus had an endemic or non-venereal form of syphilis received publicity when what were said to be his bones were exhumed nearly four centuries after his death (A. Werthemann *Schädel und Gebeine des Erasmus von Rotterdam* [Basel 1930]). It is now known that the wrong grave was opened in 1928. In 1974 a different skeleton was found buried nearby. The Metsys medal with it almost certainly identified the burial as that of Erasmus. See Bruno Kaufmann 'Das Grab des Erasmus im Basler Münster' in *Erasmus von Rotterdam, Vorkämpfer für Frieden und Toleranz* Ausstellung zum 450. Todestag des Erasmus von Rotterdam veranstaltet vom Historischen Museum Basel (26. April bis 7. September 1986) 66–7.
- On Erasmus' final illness and death see 'The Return to Basel' 1122–36.
- 269 Of Croton, an athlete (sixth century BC) renowned for strength and endurance. He won in wrestling seven times at Olympia. See *Adagia* I ii 51, II iii 10, and II iv 44.
- 270 Erasmus' aversions to fish and fasting and to the domination of human ordinances over Christian liberty have been made plain in 'The Profane Feast,' 'The Godly Feast,' and the present colloquy, where we meet vivid recollections of his experiences, two of them in fairly recent visits to Freiburg and Constance, one from his university days in Paris. His antipathy to fish, which he hated worse than snakes ('The Profane Feast' 143:21) and could not even smell without feeling sick (Allen Ep 447:406–7 / CWE Ep 447:444–5), was unconditional and incurable.
- 271 Dispensations permitting him to eat meat, eggs, and cheese on fast days. See Allen Epp 1079:5n, 1353:5, 56, 83–7, 1585:22–3 / CWE Epp 1079:7 and n1, 1353:7, 64–5, 94–9, 1585:26–7; *De esu carniū* LB IX 1212D. Ep 1542 is the official notice of dispensation.
- 272 'Free city,' Freiburg in the Breisgau, where Erasmus lived from May 1529 until May 1535. See Allen Ep 2192:119–21.
- 273 An attack of kidney stone
- 274 fish] 'flesh' (*carniū*) in the first edition; later corrected to *piscium*
- 275 'Owl-rich,' for Udalricus Zasius. The same name is used for Huldrych Zwingli in 'A Pilgrimage'; see 624:40 and n23. Zasius (1461–1535) was a prominent jurist, professor at the University of Freiburg, and imperial councillor. Erasmus had known him since 1514. About thirty of their letters survive. See CEBR and the epitaph on Zasius in CWE 85–6 176–9, 567 no 92 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 357 no 135.
- 276 Prepared 'secretly and without my knowledge' by Zasius, Erasmus reminds him (Allen Ep 1353:13–14 / CWE Ep 1353:17–18).
- 277 'I myself, however, as you know, did not partake' (Allen Ep 1353:16 / CWE Ep 1353:20–1).
- 278 A rumour to this effect has reached him, Erasmus adds, and he asks Zasius if it is true. He is sceptical about it (Allen Ep 1353:1–12 / CWE Ep 1353:2–15). In the colloquy the unqualified assertion that Zasius had to give an explanation to a magistrate makes a better story but is unsupported by the letter. Either Erasmus had a lapse of memory here or simply chose to enhance the anecdote.
- 279 So 708:12–15 above. That such frivolities should interfere with divine service is bad enough, but especially objectionable if they interfere with hearing the

sermon. That is one reason he protests against church music: it takes time from the sermon. See 'A Pilgrimage' n161.

- 280 The next half-dozen paragraphs relate events in Erasmus' visit of several weeks in September 1522 to another close friend, Johann von Botzheim, canon of Constance ('Ferventia'). He was delighted with Botzheim's house and hospitality, as he says in Allen Ep 1342:336–80 / CWE 1342:372–418. On Botzheim see CEBR and 'The Godly Feast' introduction 172–3. Botzheim, of a noble Alsatian family, was both scholar and churchman and a friend of scholars. For these reasons he was a favourite of Erasmus. They shared similar opinions about the Reformation.

- 281 Evidently his usual diet when ill; Allen Ep 1610:89–90

- 282 On dried fruit in the invalid's diet see Allen Ep 1452:28n.

- 283 Cf 1 Cor 8:9.

- 284 What follows is a precious bit of autobiography, coloured by unforgotten indignation at conditions of life and learning in the University of Paris. Erasmus could write flatteringly of that famous institution when doing so suited his rhetorical purposes (as in *Panegyricus* LB IV 515F–516A / ASD IV-1 40:451–8), but more often his experience prompted him to satire or irony. This disposition is noticeable in later years when he was provoked by censure from theologians there and had to defend himself against the conservatism and what he saw as the arrogant hostility of the Sorbonists. His memories of the Collège de Montaigu were depressing. He had entered in the autumn of 1495, a graduate student rather than undergraduate with respect to age, intending to work for a doctorate in theology. He remained in Paris most of the ensuing four years but how long in Montaigu is not clear; not more than a year, but too long to please him.

The fishmonger's remark that he too had lived in a college is amusing. Was he a college servant or possibly even a student? We are allowed to assume the latter. Lest we think it incredible that a Paris student should later have sunk to the status of a fishmonger, we might remember that in a group of former Paris students we have met in 'The Old Men's Chat,' one, Polygamus, who afterwards renounced all pretensions to learning, became a manual worker. Another, Pampirus, went into trade.

- 285 *ab aceto*; punning on *acetum* 'vinegar' and French *aigu* (in 'Montaigu') 'sharp,' 'pungent.' 'A word of wisdom' because *acetum* suggests not only something sour (*Adagia* II iii 52) but 'shrewdness,' 'sense,' 'wit.'

The Collège de Montaigu succeeded the Collège des Aicelins, which dated from 1314. Aicelins declined but was refounded in 1388 by Pierre Aicelin de Montaigu, a cardinal and bishop, and it was henceforth called Montaigu. It existed until 1580. For its site see Thorndike *University Records* facing 448 or the map in Bainton *Erasmus of Christendom* 33. On the university and the intellectual milieu of Paris during Erasmus' years there, Augustin Renaudet *Préréforme et humanisme* is essential. Other useful surveys of Erasmus' Paris are M.M. Phillips 'Autour du Paris d'Erasmus' in *Mélanges offerts à M. Abel Lefranc* (Paris 1936) 113–29; M. Reulos 'Paris au temps d'Erasmus' in *Colloquia Erasmi Turonensis* 1 79–86. Histories of European universities, Paris in particular, are plentiful, but none need be named here except Hastings Rashdall's classic work, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (Oxford 1895), new edition by

F.M. Powicke and A.B. Emden (Oxford 1936), and Thorndike *University Records*, which is concerned mostly with Paris but includes many fifteenth-century documents of interest to readers of Erasmus. The principal history of Montaigu is Marcel Godet *La congrégation de Montaigu* (Paris 1912), but on matters pertinent to Erasmus one must go to Renaudet's book also.

- 286 As was said earlier in 'Patterns' 11:38. Rabelais (1.37) remembered this observation.
- 287 Montaigu had so undistinguished a history that when its principal died in 1483 the chapter of Notre-Dame decided to close the college. They were dissuaded by Jan Standonck, an MA they had appointed guardian of the chapel and library. He was named principal and immediately showed himself a determined reformer and rigorous disciplinarian. A native of Mechelen, he had been a pupil of the Brethren of the Common Life in Gouda, then a student in Louvain. After moving to Paris and the Sorbonne he became a power in the university, served as rector, and was influential in establishing colleges in Louvain, Mechelen, Hainault, and Cambrai. It is necessary to distinguish the old Collège de Montaigu that Standonck took over in 1483 from a new foundation of his own that became part of the college. This was the *Domus pauperum* (1490), an order of eighty-six students, most of them in the arts course and a few in theology. Montaigu provided their instruction, but they had to live an austere, semi-monastic life, beg part of their food daily, and have as little contact as possible with the rest of the university. Nevertheless the order flourished and in due time received papal approval. Standonck's program, continued by his successor Béda, served as a source of recruits for reformers of many religious houses in the Paris area (James K. Farge *Biographical Register of Paris Doctors of Theology, 1500–1536* [Toronto 1980] 31 no 34).
- Whether Erasmus was a member of the older Collège de Montaigu or the *Domus pauperum* is uncertain. Allen (Ep 73:9n and *Age of Erasmus* 202), followed by Preserved Smith (*Erasmus: A Study of His Life, Ideals and Place in History* [New York and London 1923; repr New York 1962] 25) says he entered the *Domus pauperum*. Renaudet (*Préréforme et humanisme* 267) and Johan Huizinga (*Erasmus of Rotterdam* trans F. Hopman [New York and London 1924; repr *Erasmus and the Age of Reformation* New York 1957] 21) urge that since he was furnished with means of support by the bishop of Cambrai he was not in the *Domus*. His status as a priest and the fact that he was considerably older than the youths in the *Domus* makes his membership there unlikely, but he would still be familiar with the harsh discipline and meagre diet for which Montaigu was notorious.

If we accept the testimony of Erasmus, the college was a cruel stepmother rather than an alma mater. On this subject his testimony can be checked by that of other witnesses and by local tradition. Even after making allowances for his resentment, his natural fastidiousness, and exaggeration – for he would have found imperfections in any college – we may believe he had reason to be bitter about his life there. Everything we know about Standonck tends to confirm the impression of him produced by the account in 'A Fish Diet': a man who had experienced and survived direst poverty but could not forget it; devout but fanatical, a disciplinarian so severe that his rule at Montaigu was at times almost sadistic; in short, a pious extremist whose notions of education were

precisely the kind Erasmus and kindred spirits would find oppressive. Even his portrait (reproduced in CEBR III 281) seems intimidating.

In 1499, when Standonck was banished from Paris for a year because he spoke against Louis XII's effort to divorce his wife, Noël Bédard and a colleague, Jean Mair, both of whom Erasmus detested, took over the management of Montaigu. After Standonck's death in 1504, Bédard succeeded him as principal.

On Standonck see, besides Renaudet *Préréforme et humanisme* and Godet's history (n285 above), Renaudet 'Jean Standonck: un réformateur catholique avant la Réforme' in his *Humanisme et Renaissance* (Geneva 1958) 114–61; A. Hyma *The Christian Renaissance* (Grand Rapids 1924) 236–52; and CEBR.

Besides Erasmus, two other names of first importance in sixteenth-century religion had a connection with Montaigu: Jean Calvin and Ignatius Loyola. Calvin was there from 1523 until 1528 and studied under Bédard, who in those years was attacking the writings of Erasmus, including the *Colloquies*. Calvin shifted from theology to law while in Paris, then moved on to Orléans. Loyola entered Montaigu in February 1528, a man of thirty-seven taking a place among boys to learn Latin, but in October 1529 transferred from Montaigu to the Collège Sainte-Barbe, where he remained until he received an MA degree in 1534. Some historians who noticed similarities between Loyola's constitutions for the Jesuits and Standonck's for students of the *Domus pauperum* (1500) inferred that Standonck's had important influence on Loyola's. In a careful examination of this question, I. Rodríguez-Grahit argues, convincingly in my opinion, that although Loyola lived at Montaigu under the discipline which Standonck took (except for its harshness) from the Brethren of the Common Life, he was, at thirty-seven, not an impressionable young man. On the contrary he had already experienced comparable spiritual discipline in Spain before coming to Paris; Montaigu was a parallel but not a novel experience. Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* and other directions for Jesuit piety may have owed something to Montaigu, but even so the debt was only partial, not major or decisive. See 'Ignace de Loyola et le collège de Montaigu' BHR 20 (1958) 388–401, especially 394–400.

- 288 An allusion to Standonck's zeal in recruiting young men for monasteries. Before his death more than three hundred of his pupils had entered religious orders (Rodríguez-Grahit [preceding note] 392).
- 289 Barbarous, cruel; *Adagia* II iii 35
- 290 Similarly Erasmus, when replying to the urgings of Servatius Rogerus, prior of Steyn, that he return to the monastery he had left in 1493 or 1494, imagines someone arguing that he, Erasmus, had had the usual year and a day of probation there and was of mature age to decide whether to stay. 'What nonsense!' is his answer. 'As if one could require a youth of sixteen, with a largely bookish upbringing, to know himself – a considerable accomplishment even for an old man – or to learn, in a single year, what many greybeards have not yet grasped!' (Allen Ep 296:34–7 / CWE Ep 296:35–8). He goes on to declare that he was utterly unsuited to monastic life.
- 291 *Adagia* II iii 40
- 292 *Adagia* III vi 43
- 293 Unsanitary conditions, we are told by one authority, were much worse than in the preceding century: 'Nothing is further from the truth than extending the austerity and filth deplored by Erasmus in the Collège of Montaigu in the

- sixteenth century to the well-regulated institutions of the fourteenth century' (Astrik L. Gabriel *Student Life in Ave Maria College, Medieval Paris* [Notre Dame, Ind 1955] 225–6). On sanitation in medieval Paris see Lynn Thorndike 'Sanitation, Baths, and Street-Cleaning in the Middle Ages and Renaissance' *Speculum* 3 (1928) 192–203 and cf 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n48.
- 294 Rashdall's assertion that 'in all the university records of the Middle Ages there is not a single hint or allusion to corporal punishment until the fifteenth century' (*Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* [n285 above] III 359) is surprising but has not been refuted, so far as I know. Such punishment was common in grammar schools, where the birch rod was the symbol of the master's authority, as many surviving descriptions and pictures prove. See 'School' 114:3–6, 17–25. In universities corporal punishment was not unknown in the fifteenth century. One of the Paston women, inquiring about her son's progress in learning, says, 'And if he hath nought do well, nor wyll nought amend, prey hym [Grenefeld] that he wyll trewly belassch hym, tyl he wyll amend; and so ded the last maystr, and the best that ever he had, att Caumbrege' (*Paston Letters* 28 January 1458; ed James Gairdner, 6 vols [London 1904] III 123 no 362). Erasmus denounces the floggings common in grammar schools. In *De pueris instituendis* a well-known anecdote of the cruel beatings inflicted by a pedagogue of his acquaintance tells of one occasion when a young pupil was flogged although he had done nothing to deserve punishment. The master admitted as much, but said that even though innocent the youth 'simply had to be humbled.' This master may have been Standonck. See LB I 505A–C / ASD I-2 56:19–57:12 / CWE 26 327. Standonck's successors as principal of Montaigu, Béda and then Pierre Tempeste, continued the practice of severe discipline. On Béda see the testimony of a former pupil in a letter to Erasmus (Allen Ep 1963:19–29). Rabelais quotes a line of a student song deriding Tempeste, who he says was 'a mighty flogger of youths at Montaigu' (*Gargantua and Pantagruel* 4.21); see Renaudet *Préforme et humanisme* 690).
- 295 Noël Béda, who had no sense of humour, was evidently annoyed by Erasmus' pleasantry about rotten eggs: 'a grave reason for making such a fuss!' (Allen Ep 1723:41–5). Nor was he likely to have forgotten Erasmus' earlier gibe that 'a beet savours of wisdom' (see 'Patterns' 12:1–2).
- 296 With this comment compare 'The Old Men's Chat' 457:15–17. On Erasmus and Carthusians see 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' introduction 328–9.
- 297 The subject introduced at 694:38 above
- 298 On the obligation see 711:7–9 and n249 above; with the behaviour described, cf 707:25–708:20 and 714:8–11 above.
- 299 On anxiety about slips of the tongue in sermons or prayers, for example naming Mary instead of Christ or the Holy Spirit, or naming them in the wrong order, see Allen Ep 2178:20–2; Latimer *Selected Sermons* 183; J.W. Blench *Preaching in England in the Late Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: A Study of English Sermons 1450–c 1600* (Oxford 1964) 276n.
- 300 Cf 705:8–32, 711:14–29 above, and see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' nn46–7; 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' n7.
- 301 Matt 5:23–4. Cf *Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 119F–120A.
- 302 A pervasive vice. See *Lingua* LB IV 692D–693B / ASD IV-1A 83:914–85:948 / CWE 29 316–17.

- 303 'Things and Names' 813:21-3
- 304 If he has a concubine, he is still a priest; 'if he makes her his wife, to the fire with them!' (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 100E). For a summary of Erasmus' own views on sacerdotal celibacy see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n6 and *Supputatio* LB IX 485D, 488A-489A (replies to Bédā).
- 305 Vicars-general, who arranged ordinations. To present a candidate for holy orders and vouch for his moral character had been an office performed by archdeacons also.
- 306 Cf 711:24-39 above. For ordination a man had to have reached the age of twenty-five (Third Lateran Council of 1179 [canon 3; Tanner I 212-13], reaffirmed by Trent [session 23 [1563] Decree on reform, canon 12; Tanner II 748]). Standards of intellectual and moral competence should be strict, but some preachers Erasmus heard of were so scatterbrained that the people laughed at them (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 782E), and candidates were ordained in spite of deficient education (see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n49). This is the sort of thing bishops should not tolerate (*De esu carniū* LB IX 1201D-E). In *Utopia* priests are of extraordinary holiness 'and therefore very few' (Yale CWM 4 227, 229, 231). On this subject Erasmus and More were of one mind. Cf 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1100:37-8.
- 307 In a trial or some other legal proceeding when he is under oath. On such as 'perjure themselves in every third word' see 'The Liar and the Man of Honour.'
- 308 *colore*, as in Juvenal 6.28. *Color* in rhetoric is an argument or suggestion intended to put an act in a favourable light (Quintilian 4.2.88, 12.2.1-14).
- 309 crime] *crimen* in all editions through March 1529, then *discrimen* to and including the edition of March 1533; *Opera omnia* 1538-40 and LB have *crimen*.
- 310 On these see *Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 603C / ASD IV-1 206:247-52 / Born 239 / CWE 27 276. Cf *Lingua* LB IV 692E; ASD IV-1A 84:922-9 / CWE 29 317.
- 311 See 698:1-8 above with the notes.
- 312 See 'The Seraphic Funeral' 1011:15-37.
- 313 *ex diametro*; *Adagia* I x 45
- 314 In this context, unworthy monks or priests
- 315 Apostasy is renunciation and desertion of Christianity, defecting to Satan. Nowadays, says Erasmus, those who leave religious orders are called apostates. But it is far worse to lead a wicked life, whether in or out of an order, than to abandon a particular mode of life (as a religious) yet remain a sincere Christian (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 1024C-1025F). Erasmus had incurred a charge of apostasy by leaving his monastery (Steyn) and not returning. See Allen Ep 447:433-47, 615-30 / CWE Ep 447:473-89, 682-98. His anxiety over this difficulty was finally relieved by a dispensation from Leo x in 1517. See the introduction to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 284.
- 316 This question of whether fidelity to monastic profession ought to be honoured more than the vows every Christian takes, or are taken for him, in baptism, was asked and answered in an earlier colloquy, 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 290:19-292:35; and see especially nn27 and 57 there.
- 317 Erasmus comments from time to time on the complacent attitude towards adultery, compared with the degree of social disgrace and punishment for other offences. In ancient Israel adultery was punished by death (Lev 20:10), in classical societies similarly; yet today, he adds, it is too often treated as a

kind of joke (*De concordia* LB V 499A; see also *Exomologesis* LB V 153F; *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 648B, 700B–701C; *Adagia* IV vi 25). The contrast with public attitudes towards theft occurs again in *Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 599A / ASD IV-1 200:11–16 / Born 228 / CWE 27 269.

- 318 Some Swiss cantons forbade citizens to fight as mercenaries for foreign governments, but this legislation had little effect. See Vincent *Switzerland* (n199 above) Appendix 1.
- 319 As we read in 'Military Affairs,' 'The Soldier and the Carthusian,' and 'Cyclops.'
- 320 Cf 'Inns' 374:7–13. The present colloquy opens with banter about bad fish and bad meat.
- 321 Cf 720:4–8 below and, on priests, 711:14–29 and n252 above.
- 322 Used in exorcisms, as in 'Exorcism' 537:1–2
- 323 'Wreaths,' but here denoting strings of beads used in counting prayers in the rosary or other devotions
- 324 Cf 1 Cor 6:19, as at 711:23 above.
- 325 Erasmus often rebukes those who put their trust in saints more than Christ (cf *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 953A–B). This does not mean he wholly rejected the efficacy of invoking saints or that he himself never prayed to them. He prayed to St Geneviève more than once when he was ill (Allen Epp 50, 124:13–15 / CWE Epp 50, 124:15–17) and see CWE 85–6 168–77, 556–64 no 88 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 350 no 131. In 1514 when he injured his back while riding he made a vow to St Paul that he would complete a commentary on the Epistle to the Romans if relieved of his pain (Allen Ep 301:18–29 / CWE Ep 301: 20–37). He did improve within a few days but never completed the commentary, though some of that material doubtless found its way into his *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* and Paraphrase on Romans published in 1516 and 1517 (LB VI and VII).
He denies that there is any deprecation of trust in saints in these lines. He is simply calling attention, he insists, to the deluded judgments of persons who call upon Mary and the saints before praying to Christ or invoking him directly. Cf 'The Shipwreck' nn19 and 38 and, for an example, 'A Pilgrimage' 624:40–628:18. On the proper veneration of the Virgin Mary and of the saints see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 475:12–13, and for some other typical remarks on these themes *Enchiridion* LB V 26E–27D, 31C–D / CWE 66 63–5; *In psalmum quantum concio* LB V 264C–D; *Enarratio in psalmum xxxiii* LB V 385E–386A, 501A–B; Allen Ep 1347:69–103 / CWE Ep 1347:78–115, Allen Epp 1581:708–16, 2443:209–26. A long passage in *Modus orandi Deum* (LB V 1116A–1120A) confirms Erasmus' essentially orthodox position on the truly reverent veneration of saints as contrasted with practices of vulgar superstition and ignorance. On Christopher see 'The Shipwreck' n26; *Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 136D; *Adagia* III iii 1 LB II 776B–C.
- 326 As in 'The Shipwreck' 355:11–12, 356:15, and see *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1165D–F.
- 327 On George see 'A Pilgrimage' n39 and *Adagia* III iii 1: *Sileni Alcibiadis* LB II 776B; on Barbara, 'Military Affairs' n21 and Allen Ep 1347:80–8 / CWE Ep 1347:89–99. George and Christopher or Barbara and other auxiliary saints are often named together by Erasmus.

- 328 St Antony of Egypt, eldest of the desert Fathers. On the pig see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 475:6–9 and n43); on the fire, 'A Pilgrimage' n40. He carries a bell (cf Allen Ep 3002:858), perhaps as a warning to demons.
- 329 Often spelled Rock. He won fame by nursing the sick during an epidemic (fourteenth century) in northern Italy. He is mentioned (along with Christopher, Barbara, George, and others) in *Enchiridion* LB v 26E, 27B / CWE 66 63, 64; *Modus orandi Deum* LB v 1120C, 1124E; with Antony in *Precesiones* LB v 1206B. Cf *Adagia* III ix 38. His tomb in Venice was known to pilgrims.
- 330 Bishop of Paris and martyr c 258; patron saint of France. Later legendary accounts identify him with Dionysius the Areopagite (see 'The New Mother' n51) and Dionysius bishop of Corinth (c 170).
- 331 A basic principle, though difficult to define precisely. 'No one can interpret Scripture rightly [*recte*] unless he is inspired by that same Spirit who is the author of Scripture' (*Responsio ad disputationem de divortio* LB IX 967D). Some questions about the inspiration received by preachers are asked and answered interestingly in *Antibarbari* LB x 1740F–1742D / ASD I-1 132:4–134:30 / CWE 23 115:31–118:22. See also *Ecclesiastes* LB v 772B–781F and *passim*.
- 332 All these Fathers were favourites of Erasmus. The greatest if not earliest of Christian Platonists, Origen (c 185–c 254) was regarded by many later theologians as heretical or at least unorthodox on such questions as the eternity of the world and the nature of souls after death. Erasmus did not agree with all the articles of his philosophy and theology (see 'Faith' n117) but valued him very highly, considering him the best interpreter of Scripture among the Greek Fathers, as Tertullian was among the Latin (Allen Ep 1844:16–20). He once avowed that he had learned more Christian wisdom from a single page of Origen than from ten pages of Augustine (Allen Ep 844:251–4 / CWE Ep 844:271–4). His interest in Origen dated from 1501, when he asked a Franciscan friend for the loan of a volume of Origen's homilies. In 1504 he wrote to Colet of having read Origen with much profit (Allen Ep 181:38–41 / CWE Ep 181:45–8). This admiration continued as long as he lived. He published a translation, with an introductory essay, of some chapters of Origen's commentary on Matthew in 1527 (LB VIII 425A–440A, 439E–484B). It seems appropriate that when dying he was still busy with an edition of Origen in Latin. This was brought out in 1536, a few months after his death. Erasmus was roundly criticized by Bêda for being too fond of Origen (Epp 1579, 1581), but Origen played an important part in his thinking about Christian doctrine and in his biblical exegesis. On various aspects of Origen's importance for Erasmus and his contemporaries see D.P. Walker 'Origène en France au début du xvi^e siècle' in *Courants religieux et humanisme* (Paris 1959) 101–19; A.H.T. Levi *Pagan Virtue and the Humanism of the Northern Renaissance* (London 1974); Max Schär *Das Nachleben des Origenes im Zeitalter des Humanismus* (Basel 1979); A. Godin 'Erasmus et le modèle origénien de la prédication' in *Colloquia Erasmi Turonensis* II 807–20, 'The *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*: The Modes of an Origenian Appropriation' *ERSY* 2 (1982) 47–79, and his elaborate treatise *Erasmus: lecteur d'Origène* (Geneva 1982).
- On Basil, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Jerome, and Augustine see 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' nn21–5; on Ambrose 'The Godly Feast' n180. On Jerome see

additionally 'Youth' 93:4–5 and n17. Erasmus' introductions to his editions or translations of these theologians are the best sources of his estimates of them.

- 333 'They' refers to those who 'prefer to invoke' and 'call [this practice] praiseworthy.'
- 334 Franciscans were distinguished by rope cords; Augustinians wore leather belts (see n208 above). With the 'absurd scandals' – and the danger of miscarriage – mentioned here compare 705:16–32 above.
- 335 If Erasmus has specific passages in mind they may be Matt 6:25–31 and 1 Tim 6:6–11, but probably he is thinking of Christ's and Paul's preaching in entire discourses, such as the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 and Paul's emphasis on Christian liberty in 1 Corinthians 6, 8, 10. Cf 'The Godly Feast' 189:37–192:4.
- 336 So *Adagia* I vi 1 in the 1508 edition. Erasmus quotes a Greek proverb from Gellius 2.6.9. 'Kitchen gardener' (*olitor*) renders a Greek word (*κηπωρός*) found in all the manuscripts of Gellius that Erasmus had seen. His admired friend Paolo Bombace (Bombasius), an eminent Hellenist, had some doubts about the authenticity of the Greek term and conjectured *μωρός* 'foolish' person. Though inclined to agree, Erasmus decided he could not go against the consensus of the manuscripts. Later however he came across this word *μωρός* 'foolish' in the proverb as found in a line attributed to Aeschylus (LB II 220E–221D). When quoting the proverb at the end of *Moriae encomium* he adopted 'foolish' (LB IV 504C / ASD IV-3 194:271 / CWE 27 153) yet still later kept the other word (*olitor*) when quoting the proverb in this colloquy.
- 337 There is no clue as to the identity of this fellow, if indeed Erasmus had a particular individual in mind, but he seems a suitable colleague for those mentioned at 703:30–704:3.
- 338 In 1519 a Carmelite theologian denounced Erasmus' New Testament as a sign of the advent of Antichrist, but later admitted that he had neither read nor even seen the book (Allen Ep 948:136–44 / CWE Ep 948:141–9). On Antichrist cf 'The New Mother' n18.

THE FUNERAL

Funus

First printed in the February 1526 edition.

Erasmus' dialogue 'The Funeral,' dramatizing the dying of two men, is related loosely to the tradition of *ars moriendi*. Those discourses on how to die were an established type of Christian edification; for the history of this genre see Mary Catharine O'Connor *The Art of Dying Well* (New York 1942). A French treatise on the theme was translated into English by Caxton and published by him in 1490 and 1491 (STC 786, 789). Nancy L. Beaty *The Craft of Dying* (New Haven 1970) surveys the tradition of *ars moriendi* in England. Erasmus contributed to this literature more than once. His *Declamatio de morte* (LB IV 617A–624A), a rather superficial composition, was written in 1509 and printed in 1517; it was later inserted in *De conscribendis epistolis* (ASD I-2 441:12–455:27 / CWE 25 156–64). An English translation appeared in 1531 (STC 10510). In 1534, when he was an old man with death never far from his thoughts, he produced the more impressive *De praeparatione ad mortem* (LB V 1293B–1318D / ASD V-1 339–92); an anonymous English translation was printed in London in 1538 (STC 10505). He undertook this essay at the request of Thomas Boleyn, Earl of Wiltshire (Ep 2884), to whom he had dedicated *Explanatio symboli* in 1533. According to the imperial ambassador, Eustace Chapuys, Catherine of Aragon read *De praeparatione ad mortem* towards the end of her life and received consolation from it (Allen Ep 3090:29–53). The book written for Thomas Boleyn comforted the queen whom his daughter Anne had supplanted.

Another *ars moriendi* of 1534 was Thomas Lupset's *A compendious treatyse teachynge the waye of dyenge well* (STC 16934). Lupset was a favourite pupil of Colet's at St Paul's School and well known to Erasmus (see the introduction to 'The Whole Duty of Youth' 88); their correspondence is printed in Allen. For the text see J.A. Gee *Life and Works of Thomas Lupset* (New Haven 1928) 263–90. This is a good piece of Tudor prose and a sound presentation of arguments Colet and Erasmus would both endorse – that life is a preparation for death and that the best way to die is to have lived a good and pious life.

Between 'The Funeral' and *De praeparatione ad mortem* there are many interesting points of comparison. Both express the commonplaces of all *artes moriendi*, but the differences in structure and tone show once more how Erasmus could fit matter to whatever form and whatever occasion he chose. *De praeparatione ad mortem*, hortatory and at times eloquent, is cast in a conventional mode. In 'The Funeral' he creates scenes and characters and does

not exhort but dramatizes. In each of its two main parts language and style are perfectly appropriate to purpose. In the account of George's elaborate dying, banter, satire, even boisterous farce are used. By contrast with all this, the calm, subdued description of Cornelius' last hours is brief, but this very brevity enforces the distinction between hypocritical ostentation and simple, sincere Christian piety. The final paragraphs will recall to many readers, as they were no doubt meant to recall, the equanimity of Socrates in *Phaedo*. But Cornelius' death is intended to illustrate Christian confidence, not pagan virtue, however sublime. As much as could be said for Socrates had been said in 'The Godly Feast' (194:34).

Like 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake,' 'The Funeral' must have pleased Cromwell and those who approved of his policies. An anonymous English translation (London 1534, printed by Robert Copland for John Byddell) was probably the earliest printing of an Erasmian colloquy in that language, though an earlier date has been claimed for an English version of *Coniugium* which has not survived (see Devereux 4.8.1). A copy of the 1534 translation, lacking the first leaf, came to light in 1960; it was bound with translations of *De esu carniū* and *Julius exclusus*. The English translator gives no clue to his identity. Whoever he was, he did his work well. See the edition by Robert R. Allen *The dialoge called Funus & A very pleasaunt & fruitful Dialoge called The Epicure* (Chicago 1969), whose introduction gives the essential information. Five other translations of *Funus* had appeared before 1534, two into Spanish and three into German (*The dialoge* ed Allen 6–7). The translation into Low German has on the title-page a woodcut showing George lying on the floor, with many friars close by; one of them is covering him with a Franciscan cloak. Cornelius is sitting up, hands folded, his wife, son, daughter, and a priest with crucifix at his side.

MARCOLPHUS, PHAEDRUS

Marcolphus Where does our Phaedrus come from? Not from the cave of Trophonius, are you?¹

5 **Phaedrus** Why do you ask that?

Marcolphus Because you're uncommonly sad, dishevelled, dirty, wild-looking:² in short, as unlike your name as possible.³

Phaedrus If those who spend their time in coppersmiths' shops are bound to get blackened, why are you surprised if I'm gloomier than usual when
10 I've spent so many days in the company of two sick, dying, and buried men, both of them very dear to me?

Marcolphus Whose burials are you talking about?



Woodcut on the title-page of an early German translation of *Funus*
(Magdeburg 1531)
Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel

Phaedrus You know George Balearicus?

Marcolphus Only by name, not by sight.

Phaedrus I know you're not acquainted with the other one, Cornelius Montius.⁴ We were intimate friends for many years.

5 **Marcolphus** I've never had the experience of being present at a deathbed.⁵

Phaedrus I have – oftener than I would wish.

Marcolphus But is death as dreadful a thing as it's commonly asserted to be?⁶

10 **Phaedrus** The road leading up to it is harder than death itself. If a man dismisses from his thought the horror and imagination of death, he will have rid himself of a great part of the evil. In brief, whatever the torment of sickness or death, it is rendered much more endurable if a person surrenders himself wholly to the divine will. For awareness of death, when the soul is already separated from the body,⁷ is, I think, either non-existent or else an
15 extremely low-grade awareness, because before nature reaches this point it dulls and stuns all areas of sensation.

Marcolphus We're born without our being aware of it.

Phaedrus But not without a mother's being aware of it.

20 **Marcolphus** Why don't we die in the same way? Why did God mean death to be such a torture?

Phaedrus He meant birth to be painful and dangerous for the mother in order that she might love her offspring more dearly. But death he meant to be dreadful for everyone, lest men far and wide commit suicide. And since, even today, we see so many do violence to themselves, what do you
25 suppose would happen if death weren't horrible? Whenever a servant or even a young son got a thrashing, whenever a wife fell out with her husband, whenever a man lost his money, or something else occurred that upset him, off they'd rush to noose, sword, river, cliff, poison. As matters now stand, the bitterness of death makes life more precious to us, especially since
30 physicians can't cure a man once he's dead. Though all men don't die in the same way, just as they're not all born in the same way. Some find release in a quick death; others sink into a slow death. Persons with sleeping sickness, likewise those stung by an adder, die unconscious, stupefied with sleep. I've noticed this: that no kind of death is so bitter but that it can be endured if
35 one has resolved to die with steadfast mind.

Marcolphus Which man's death seemed more Christian?

Phaedrus To me, George's seemed more crowned with honour.

Marcolphus Does even death have its vainglory?

40 **Phaedrus** Never have I seen two men die so differently. If you've time to listen, I'll describe each one's end. You shall judge which death would be preferable for a Christian.

Marcolphus Oh, yes, do be good enough to tell me. There's nothing I'd rather hear.

Phaedrus First hear about George, then. The moment unmistakable signs of death appeared, the company of physicians who had long attended the patient began to demand their fees, hiding their feeling of hopelessness about his life.

Marcolphus How many doctors were there?

Phaedrus Sometimes ten, sometimes twelve; never fewer than six.

Marcolphus Enough to kill even a healthy man!⁸

Phaedrus When they had their money, they warned the relatives confidentially that death was not far off; that they should look to his spiritual welfare, for there was no hope of his physical safety. And the patient was warned courteously by his close friends to entrust his body to God's care, concerning himself only with what belonged to making a good end. When he heard this, George glared at the physicians in wild surmise, as though incensed at being deserted by them. They retorted that they were physicians, not gods; that what their skill could do had been performed; but that no medicine could prevail against destiny.⁹ After this, they went into the next bedroom.

Marcolphus What? They lingered even after they were paid?

Phaedrus They had disagreed completely over what sort of disease it was. One said dropsy; another, tympanites;¹⁰ another, an intestinal abscess – each one named a different ailment. And during the whole time they were treating the patient they quarrelled violently about the nature of his malady.

Marcolphus Lucky patient meanwhile!

Phaedrus To settle their dispute once for all, they requested through his wife that they be permitted later to perform an autopsy on the body¹¹ – quite a compliment, that, and done customarily as a mark of respect in the case of eminent persons. Furthermore, it would help save many lives and would increase George's accumulation of merits.¹² Last of all, they promised to buy a trental of masses at their own expense for the repose of his soul.¹³ Their request met with opposition, to be sure, but was finally granted, thanks to their flattery of his wife and relations. Business disposed of, the medical congress adjourned, because it's not right, they say, for those whose job is to save life to look on at death or to attend funerals. Next Bernardine was summoned, a holy man (as you know), warden of the Franciscans; he was to hear confession. Hardly was confession over when the four orders commonly called mendicants¹⁴ caused a disturbance in the house.

Marcolphus So many vultures at one corpse?¹⁵

Phaedrus Then the parish priest was called in, to give the man extreme unction¹⁶ and holy communion.

Marcolphus Devoutly done.

Phaedrus Thereupon a bloody battle between the priest and the monks very nearly broke out.¹⁷

Marcolphus At the sick man's bedside?

5 **Phaedrus** Yes, and with Christ watching.

Marcolphus What provoked such unexpected uproar?

Phaedrus When the priest learned that the patient had confessed to the Franciscan, he declared he would not administer the rite of extreme unction, the Eucharist, or burial unless he had heard the patient's confession with his
10 own ears. He was the parish priest; he would have to render an account of his flock to the Lord; this he could not do if he alone were unfamiliar with the secrets of the man's conscience.¹⁸

Marcolphus Didn't that seem fair enough?

Phaedrus Not to them, you may be sure. They all objected vigorously,
15 Bernardine and the Dominican Vincent in particular.

Marcolphus What was their contribution?

Phaedrus They fell upon the priest and abused him violently, repeatedly calling him ass and fit for a swineherd. 'I,' says Vincent, 'am a full-fledged bachelor of sacred theology, and soon to be licensed, and even to be
20 distinguished by the title of doctor.¹⁹ You scarcely read the Gospel,²⁰ so far are you from being able to probe the secrets of conscience. But if you like to be meddlesome, find out what your wife and bastards²¹ are doing at home,²² and many other remarks of this kind that I'm ashamed to mention.

Marcolphus What did he do? Did he keep quiet at this?

25 **Phaedrus** Quiet? On the contrary, you'd say he was a cicada caught by the wing.²³ 'I could make much better bachelors than you out of beanstalks,'²⁴ says he. 'Where did Dominic and Francis, the founders and heads of your orders, learn the Aristotelian philosophy, or the reasonings of Thomas, or the speculations of Scotus? Or where were they granted their bachelor's
30 degrees?²⁵ You crept into a world still credulous, but you were few,²⁶ humble, and some of you even learned and holy. You nested in fields and villages.²⁷ Soon you migrated to some of the wealthiest cities and to the best part of town.²⁸ You used to work in whatever fields could not support a shepherd; nowadays you're never anywhere but in rich men's houses.²⁹ You
35 boast of papal favour,³⁰ but your privileges are worthless unless a bishop, pastor, or his vicar is inactive. None of you will preach in *my* church so long as I'm in possession as pastor.³¹ I'm not a bachelor;³² neither was St Martin, and yet he served as bishop.³³ If I lack any learning, I won't seek it from you. Or do you believe the world is still so stupid that whenever it sees the
40 garb of Dominic or Francis it thinks their sanctity is present too? Is it any of your business what I do at my own home? What you do in your retreats, how

you behave with the nuns,³⁴ even the public knows. How far from good or decent are the homes of the wealthy that you frequent³⁵ "is known to every blear-eyed man and barber."³⁶

5 The rest I don't dare repeat, Marcolphus. Altogether he treated those
reverend fathers with very little reverence. And there would have been no
end to this had not George indicated with his hand that he wished to say
something. After much effort, the bickering was stilled for a while. Then
the sick man said, 'Let there be peace among you. I'll confess anew to you,
priest.³⁷ Next you shall have money paid out to you for the tolling of bells,
10 funeral dirges, monument, and burial before you leave this house. I'll see to
it that you have no reason to complain of me in any respect.'

Marcolphus The priest didn't refuse so fair a bargain as that, did he?

Phaedrus No. Only he grumbled somewhat about the confession, which he
remitted to the patient.³⁸ 'What need is there,' says he, 'for tiring both patient
15 and priest by repeating it? Had he confessed to me in time, perhaps he would
have made his will in a more Christian spirit. But it's your responsibility
now.' The sick man's fairness vexed the monks, who were indignant that
a share of the booty should fall to the parish priest. But I interceded and
managed to settle the quarrel. The priest anointed the sick man,³⁹ gave him
20 communion, and after his money was counted out he left.

Marcolphus So a calm followed that storm?

Phaedrus Oh, no, a more severe storm broke out at once.

Marcolphus What caused it, please?

Phaedrus You'll hear. The four orders of mendicants had poured into the
25 house. They were joined by a fifth, that of the Crutched Friars.⁴⁰ Against
this order, as a spurious one, these four raised a loud clamour. They asked
where the Crutched Friars had ever seen a five-wheeled wagon,⁴¹ or how
they had the impudence to maintain there were more mendicant orders than
there were evangelists. 'In the same fashion,' they said, 'you might as well
30 bring hither all the beggars from bridges and crossroads.'

Marcolphus What did the Crutched Friars say to this?

Phaedrus They countered by asking how the wagon of the church had run
when no order of mendicants existed; then, how it ran when there was one
and later three. 'For the number of the evangelists,' they said, 'has no more
35 connection with our orders than with dice, which show four corners on every
side.⁴² Who elected the Augustinians to the order of mendicants? Or who the
Carmelites? When did Augustine beg, or when Elijah?' (For these men they
make the founders of their orders.)⁴³ This and much else they thundered
boldly indeed, but, unable by themselves to withstand the onslaught⁴⁴ of the
40 four orders, they retreated, only with dire threats.

Marcolphus You enjoyed calm weather after that, surely?

Phaedrus Not at all. That alliance⁴⁵ against the fifth order turned into a gladiatorial combat. Franciscan and Dominican contended that neither Augustinians nor Carmelites were genuine mendicants but bastard and spurious. This argument raged so furiously that I was quite afraid it would

5 come to blows.

Marcolphus Did the patient put up with this?

Phaedrus It didn't take place at the bedside but in the hall next to the chamber. Nevertheless every word reached him, since they weren't whispering but playing the piece *fortissimo*. Even apart from this, as you

10 know, invalids have rather sensitive hearing.

Marcolphus How did the war end?

Phaedrus The patient asked them, through his wife, to quiet down a little and he would compose the quarrel. So he requested the Augustinians and Carmelites to leave at once; they would lose nothing by doing so. 'For,'

15 said he, 'as much food will be sent to them at their house as would be given if they remained here.' He directed all the orders, even the fifth one, to attend his funeral, and a sum of money to be divided equally among them. But to prevent disorder he forbade them to come to the wake.

20 **Marcolphus** Evidently he was a good manager, who even when dying knew how to still the waves.

Phaedrus Tush! He'd been a general in the army for many years. Disturbances of this kind in the ranks are an everyday occurrence there.

Marcolphus Was he rich?

25 **Phaedrus** Very.

Marcolphus But, as usually happens, with ill-gotten gains from robberies, sacrileges, and extortions.

Phaedrus That at least is the common practice with generals.⁴⁶ I wouldn't swear he was different from the rest in his ways. If I knew the man well,

30 however, he grew rich by his wits rather than by violence.

Marcolphus How so?

Phaedrus He was clever at accounting.

Marcolphus What of it?

Phaedrus What of it? He reported thirty thousand troops to his commander

35 when there were scarcely seven thousand. And to many soldiers he paid out nothing at all.

Marcolphus A rich accounting indeed!⁴⁷

Phaedrus Besides, he waged war scientifically. He used to contract for monthly payments at the same time by villages and towns of both friend

40 and foe: from the enemy, so fighting wouldn't break out; from friends, for allowing them to trade with the enemy.

Marcolphus I'm familiar with the common practice of military men. But finish your story.

Phaedrus So Bernardine and Vincent, with some fellow members of their orders, remained with the sick man. Provisions were sent to the others.

5 **Marcolphus** Did those who held the fort get along satisfactorily?

Phaedrus Not in every respect. They were muttering something or other about privileges granted by papal briefs, but they pretended not to, for fear their business wouldn't get finished. At this time the last will and testament was produced, and covenants were made in the presence of witnesses
10 concerning those matters they had already settled among themselves.

Marcolphus I can't wait to hear these.

Phaedrus I'll summarize them, because it's a long story. He was survived by a wife of thirty-eight, a good, sensible woman; two sons, one nineteen, the other fifteen; as many daughters, but both young and unmarried. The
15 will provided that since the wife could not be induced to become a nun she should put on a Beguine's cloak⁴⁸ – an order midway between nuns and laywomen – and the elder son, since he flatly refused to become a monk –

Marcolphus You don't catch an old fox with a noose!⁴⁹

Phaedrus – was to hurry to Rome without delay after his father's funeral.
20 There, after being made priest by a papal dispensation before reaching legal age,⁵⁰ he should say mass for his father's soul⁵¹ every day for a whole year in the Vatican basilica and every Friday crawl on his knees up the sacred steps in the Lateran.⁵²

Marcolphus Was he glad to undertake this?

25 **Phaedrus** To be blunt, he was as glad as asses are to bear heavy burdens.⁵³ The younger son was promised to St Francis, the older daughter to St Clare, the younger daughter to St Catherine of Siena.⁵⁴ Only this much could be achieved. George's intention was to have God further in his debt by putting his five survivors into five mendicant orders, and he tried very hard to do
30 so, but his wife's age and that of his elder son yielded neither to threats nor to flattery.

Marcolphus A way of disinheriting them.⁵⁵

Phaedrus The entire estate was so divided that after money for funeral expenses was set aside, one share⁵⁶ was allotted to the wife: half of this
35 for her support, half to the house she would join. If she changed her mind and backed out of the agreement, all the money was to pass to that society. Another share would fall to the son. He, however, would have passage money paid to him at once, and enough to buy the dispensation and take care of a year's living expenses in Rome. If he changed his mind and refused
40 to take priestly orders, his share would be divided between the Franciscans and Dominicans. And I fear that may happen, so strongly did the boy seem

to detest a priestly career. Two shares would go to the monastery receiving the younger son; likewise two each to the nunneries receiving the daughters, but on condition that if these children baulked at entering the religious life, the monastery and nunneries could still keep all the money.⁵⁷ Furthermore,

5 one share would go presently to Bernardine; the same amount to Vincent; half a share to the Carthusians, for a portion of all good works done by the entire order.⁵⁸ The one and one half shares remaining were to be distributed to undisclosed beggars approved by Bernardine and Vincent.

Marcolphus You should have said, lawyer-fashion, 'those beggars male and female.'

10 **Phaedrus** So when the will had been read, the covenants were made in the following terms: 'Do you, George Balearicus, being alive and of sound mind, approve this testament that you have made of recent date and in accordance with your wishes?' 'I approve.' 'And is this your final and irrevocable will?'
 15 'It is.' 'And do you appoint me and the said Vincent, bachelor, executors of your last will?' 'I do.' He was ordered to sign it again.

Marcolphus How could a dying man do that?

Phaedrus Bernardine guided the invalid's hand.

Marcolphus What did he write down?

20 **Phaedrus** 'May he who attempts henceforth to change any of this incur the wrath of St Francis and St Dominic.'

Marcolphus But weren't they afraid of a suit on grounds of inofficious testament?⁵⁹

Phaedrus That kind of suit doesn't apply to property promised to God, nor
 25 does anyone readily sue God at law.⁶⁰ When these matters were finished, the wife and children gave their right hand to the patient and swore they would keep the obligations laid upon them. After this, the funeral procession came up for discussion⁶¹ – but not without argument. Finally they agreed that from each of the five orders nine members should attend, in honour
 30 of the five books of Moses and the nine choirs of angels:⁶² each order to carry its own cross before it and sing funeral dirges. With these and the relatives should march thirty torchbearers dressed in black (thirty being the number of coins for which the Lord was sold),⁶³ and – to lend distinction – twelve mourners (the number sacred to the band of apostles, that is) should
 35 accompany them.⁶⁴ The bier was to be followed by George's horse,⁶⁵ draped in black, with head tied down to his knees to suggest that he was looking along the ground for his master. The pall⁶⁶ was to display on each side George's coat of arms. Likewise each torch and mourning garb should have his arms. Now the corpse itself was to rest at the right of the high altar in a
 40 marble tomb four feet high. On top of the tomb was to be George's effigy carved in Parian marble,⁶⁷ in full armour from head to foot.⁶⁸ His helmet

was to have his crest (a pelican's neck),⁶⁹ and his left arm a shield bearing as insignia three boars' heads⁷⁰ of gold in a field of silver.⁷¹ Nor was his sword with the golden hilt to be missing from his side, nor his gold baldric adorned with jewelled studs, nor his gold spurs from his feet; for he was a gilded knight.⁷² At his feet he was to have a leopard.⁷³ The borders of the tomb were to have an inscription worthy of such a man. He wanted his heart to be buried separately in the chapel of St Francis. His entrails he bequeathed to the parish priest for honourable burial in a chapel sacred to the Virgin Mother.⁷⁴

- 10 **Marcolphus** A splendid funeral, no doubt, but too costly. At Venice any cobbler would be accorded a more splendid one for a minimum of expense.⁷⁵ His guild gives a fine bier; and sometimes six hundred⁷⁶ monks, dressed in tunics or cloaks, accompany a single corpse.

- Phaedrus** I too have seen and laughed at this inappropriate ostentation of the poor. Fullers and tanners march in front, cobblers in the rear, monks in the middle; you'd say they were chimeras.⁷⁷ Nor would you have seen any difference here. George stipulated also that Franciscan and Dominican were to settle by lot which of them should have first place in the procession; then the rest, too, were to draw lots, to prevent any disorder on this account. The parish priest and his clerks were to have the lowest place – that is, at the front – for the monks⁷⁸ would consent to no other arrangement.⁷⁹

Marcolphus He was skilled in drawing up not only battle lines but parades as well.

- Phaedrus** It was stipulated, too, that the funeral rites, conducted by the parish priest, should be accompanied by the harmonious singing of the choir, in George's honour. During the negotiations over these and other matters, the patient shuddered and gave unmistakable signs that his last moment was near. The final act of the play was therefore prepared.

Marcolphus We're not at the end yet?

- 30 **Phaedrus** A papal brief was read, promising forgiveness of all sins and banishing fear of purgatory entirely.⁸⁰ In addition, all his goods were accounted rightful.

Marcolphus The 'goods' he got by robbery?

- Phaedrus** By the law of war and military custom, surely.⁸¹ But Philip the lawyer, his brother-in-law, chanced to be present. He noticed in the papal brief a passage that was out of order and raised the question of fraud.⁸²

Marcolphus Not at that time! Even if there was something wrong, it should have been ignored, and the sick man would have been none the worse.

- Phaedrus** I agree. And he was so upset by this news that he was almost in despair. At this juncture Vincent proved himself a man. He told George not to worry, that he himself had authority to correct and supplement any error

or omission in the brief. 'If,' says he, 'the brief fails you, I hereby substitute my own soul for yours, so that yours goes to heaven and mine is abandoned to hell.'⁸³

- 5 **Marcolphus** Does God accept such exchanges of souls? And if so, did such a pledge seem sufficient security for George? What if Vincent's soul was due for hell without any exchange?

- Phaedrus** I'm telling you what happened. Unquestionably Vincent did succeed in causing the sick man to take heart. Next, warranties were recited by which George was promised partnership in all the works done by the 10 four orders, and by the fifth, the Carthusians.⁸⁴

Marcolphus I'd be afraid of sinking down to hell if I had to carry so great a load.

Phaedrus I mean *good* works. They no more burden the soul in its upward flight than feathers do a bird.

- 15 **Marcolphus** Then to whom do they bequeath their evil works?

Phaedrus To German mercenaries.⁸⁵

Marcolphus By what warrant?

- Phaedrus** By Gospel warrant: 'Whosoever hath, to him shall be given.'⁸⁶ At the same time a number – an enormous number – of masses and psalms were 20 recited; these were to accompany the soul of the deceased. Then confession was repeated and the blessing given.

Marcolphus And so he breathed his last?

Phaedrus Not yet. A rush mat was spread on the floor and rolled up at one end to form a sort of pillow.

- 25 **Marcolphus** Now what's going to happen?

- Phaedrus** They scattered a few ashes on it,⁸⁷ and there they laid the sick man. A Franciscan tunic was spread over him,⁸⁸ but only after being blessed by short prayers and holy water. A cowl was placed at his head (for at that time it could not be put on) and along with that his brief and the 30 covenants.

Marcolphus A new kind of death.

Phaedrus But they swear the devil has no jurisdiction over those who die thus. So, they say, St Martin and St Francis, among others, died.

- Marcolphus** But their lives corresponded to this kind of death. What 35 happened after that, please?

- Phaedrus** A crucifix and wax taper were held out to the sick man.⁸⁹ To the crucifix extended to him he said, 'In war I was accustomed to rely on my shield; now will I face my foe with this shield.' And after he kissed it, he turned on his left side. To the taper he said, 'I used to excel with my spear in 40 war; now will I brandish this spear against the enemy of souls.'⁹⁰

Marcolphus Spoken like a soldier!

Phaedrus These were his last words, for presently death stopped his tongue and at the same moment he began to expire. Bernardine on his right, Vincent on his left, hung over the dying man, both in fine voice. One displayed an image of St Francis, the other that of Dominic. Others, scattered through the
 5 bedroom, murmured some psalms in a doleful tone. Bernardine assailed his right ear with great clamours, Vincent his left.

Marcolphus What were they screaming?

Phaedrus Bernardine something like this: 'George Balearicus, if now you approve what's been done between us, turn your head to the right.' He did
 10 so. Vincent, on the other side: 'Be not afraid, George, you have Francis and Dominic as your champions. Rest easy: think how many merits you have, what a papal brief; finally, remember my soul is pledged for yours if there is any danger. If you understand and approve this, nod your head to the left.' He nodded. Again, with like clamour: 'If you understand this,' he says,
 15 'press my hand.' Then George pressed his hand. So what with nodding to this side and that, and pressing of hands, nearly three hours were spent. Just as George began to gape, Bernardine, standing up straight, pronounced the absolution, but George was dead before he could finish it.⁹¹ This occurred at midnight. In the morning the autopsy was performed.⁹²

20 **Marcolphus** What disease did they find in his body?

Phaedrus I'm glad you brought that up, because it had slipped my mind. A piece of lead was lodged in his diaphragm.

Marcolphus Where did that come from?

Phaedrus His wife told us he had once been struck there by a bullet. Hence
 25 the physicians conjectured that a fragment of the melted lead was left in his body. Soon the mangled body was clothed somehow or other in a Franciscan cloak. After lunch, burial was made, with the procession that had been arranged.

Marcolphus I've never heard of a more troublesome death nor of a
 30 more pretentious funeral. But you wouldn't want this story to get out, I suppose.

Phaedrus Why not?

Marcolphus To avoid stirring up a hornets' nest.⁹³

Phaedrus No danger. And, in fact, if what I relate is righteous, it concerns
 35 these very men that the public should know it; if less than righteous, as many of them as are good will thank me for bringing it to light. Some, made ashamed of themselves, may stop doing things like this. Also, uneducated persons may take warning against making a similar mistake. For the sincere and genuinely religious men among them have often complained to me
 40 that because of the superstition or dishonesty of a few, an entire order is rendered odious among respectable people.⁹⁴

Marcolphus Well said, and boldly. But now I'm impatient to hear how Cornelius died.⁹⁵

Phaedrus As he lived without being burdensome to anyone, so he died.⁹⁶ He had a fever that recurred regularly each year. And then, either because of
 5 his old age – for he was past sixty⁹⁷ – or for some other reason, it oppressed him more than usual, and he himself seemed to sense that his last day was close at hand. So, four days before his death – it was Sunday – he went to church, confessed to his parish priest, heard sermon and mass, devoutly took communion, and returned home.⁹⁸

10 **Marcolphus** He didn't use physicians?

Phaedrus He consulted only one,⁹⁹ but one who was fully as good a man as he was a physician: James Castrutius by name.¹⁰⁰

Marcolphus I know him. No man is truer.

Phaedrus He promised to do whatever he could for his friend but said he
 15 thought there was more help in God than in doctors.¹⁰¹ Cornelius received this reply as cheerfully as if he had been given absolute assurance of life. And so, even though he had always been as liberal towards the poor as his means permitted, he then distributed among the destitute whatever he could spare from the needs of his wife and children; not to those pushing
 20 beggars whom one meets everywhere,¹⁰² but to worthy ones who struggled against their poverty by working as hard as they could. I implored him to go to bed and summon the priest rather than exhaust his feeble body. He replied that he had always tried to help his friends, if possible, rather than be under obligation to them, and that he did not want to be any different
 25 at death.¹⁰³ He didn't even take to his bed except for the last day and part of the night on which he left this earth. Meanwhile he used a cane because of his physical weakness, or sat in an armchair. Now and then he lay down on a little bed, but with his clothes on and his head up. At this time he either gave instructions for relieving the poor, particularly those who were
 30 acquaintances or neighbours,¹⁰⁴ or he read from the Bible passages exhorting man to trust God and setting forth God's love for us. If weakness prevented him from doing even this for himself, he listened while a friend read. Often, with wonderful feeling, he urged his family to mutual love and harmony and to zeal for true godliness; and he comforted them very affectionately,
 35 grieved as they were about his dying. From time to time he reminded his family not to leave any of his debts unpaid.

Marcolphus Hadn't he made a will?

Phaedrus He had attended to that long before, when he was well and strong.¹⁰⁵ For he held that those made by the dying weren't wills but rather
 40 ravings.

Marcolphus Didn't he bequeath anything to monasteries or to the needy?¹⁰⁶

Phaedrus Not a farthing.¹⁰⁷ 'I have shared my modest fortune as I could afford,' he said. 'Now, as I am handing over possession of it to others, so I hand over the spending of it. And I am confident that my family will spend it better than I myself have done.'

5 **Marcolphus** Didn't he send for holy men, as George did?

Phaedrus Not even one. Except his family and two close friends, nobody was present.

Marcolphus I wonder why he felt like that.

Phaedrus He insisted he didn't want to be troublesome to more people
10 when dying than he had been when he was born.¹⁰⁸

Marcolphus I await the end of this story.

Phaedrus You'll soon hear it. Thursday came. Feeling extremely weak, he did not leave his couch. The parish priest was called, gave him extreme unction, and again administered communion, but without confession, for
15 Cornelius said he had no lingering anxieties on his mind.¹⁰⁹ At that point the priest began to discuss the funeral – what sort of procession and where he was to be buried. 'Bury me as you would the humblest Christian,' he said. 'It makes no difference to me where you lay this poor body; it will be found on the Last Day just the same, wherever you've put it. The funeral
20 procession I care nothing about.'¹¹⁰ Presently the subjects of tolling the bells,¹¹¹ trentals¹¹² and anniversary masses, a papal brief, and purchase of a portion of merits¹¹³ came up. Then he said, 'Pastor, I'll be none the worse off if no bell tolls; or if you deem me worthy of one burial service, that will be more than enough. Or if there is anything else that because of the
25 church's public custom can scarcely be omitted without scandal to the weak, I leave that to your judgment. I do not desire to buy up someone's prayers or deprive anyone of his merits.'¹¹⁴ There is sufficient abundance of merits in Christ, and I have faith that the prayers and merits of the whole church will benefit me if only I am a living¹¹⁵ member of it. In two "briefs" rests my
30 entire hope. One is the fact that the Lord Jesus, the chief shepherd, took away my sins, nailing them to the cross; the other, that which he signed and sealed with his own sacred blood, by which he assured us of eternal salvation if we place our whole trust¹¹⁶ in him. Far be it from me that, equipped with merits and briefs,¹¹⁷ I should summon my Lord to enter into judgment with
35 his servant, certain as I am that in his sight shall no man living be justified.¹¹⁸ For my part, I appeal from his justice to his mercy, since it is boundless and inexpressible.' Whereupon the priest departed. Eager and joyous,¹¹⁹ as though with strong hope of salvation, Cornelius ordered to be read to him certain biblical passages confirming the hope of resurrection and rewards
40 of immortality: as that in Isaiah on the postponement of Hezekiah's death, along with his hymn;¹²⁰ then the fifteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to

the Corinthians; the story of Lazarus' death from John;¹²¹ but above all, the narrative of Christ's passion from the Gospels. How eagerly he concentrated on every one of these,¹²² sighing at some, giving thanks with folded hands at others, at some rejoicing and exulting, at others uttering brief prayers! After
 5 lunch, when he had taken a short nap, he had the twelfth chapter of John read, to the very end. When this was done, you would have said the man was completely transformed and breathed upon by a new spirit.

Day was already turning to evening. He called for his wife and children; then, straightening up as much as his weakness permitted, he
 10 spoke to his family thus: 'My dearest wife, those whom earlier God had joined together, now likewise he puts asunder; but in body only, and that for a little while. The care, love, and devotion you have been accustomed to divide between me and our sweetest children, transfer wholly to them. Do not suppose you can deserve better by any means, either of God or of me,
 15 than by so nurturing, cherishing, and instructing those whom God gave to us as the fruits of our marriage, that they may be found acceptable unto Christ. Double your devotion towards them, therefore, and consider my share made over to you. If you do that – as I am confident you will – there will be no reason they should seem orphans. But if you remarry'¹²³ – at this word his
 20 wife broke into tears and began to swear she would never think of marrying again. Then Cornelius: 'My dearest sister in Christ, if the Lord Jesus shall deem best to grant you that resolution and strength of spirit, do not fail the heavenly gift, for this will be more comfortable for you and the children alike. But if weakness of the flesh shall call otherwise, know that my death
 25 releases you from the marriage bond, but not from the obligation you have in my name, and in your own, of caring for our children. As for marrying, use the liberty the Lord has given you. This only do I ask and warn you of: that you choose a husband of such moral character, and bear yourself towards him in such a way, that, guided by his own kindness and prompted
 30 by your gentleness, he may love his stepchildren. Be cautious, therefore, about binding yourself by any vow. Keep yourself free for God and for our children. So train them to every form of godliness that you may dissuade them from committing themselves to any career before age and experience demonstrate what mode of life they are suited for.'¹²⁴ Turning next to his
 35 children, he exhorted them to the pursuit of righteousness, to obedience to their mother, and to mutual love and concord among themselves. Having spoken these words, he kissed his wife and children, and making the sign of the cross invoked the favour and mercy of Christ. Then, looking upon all who were present, he said, 'By dawn tomorrow the Lord who
 40 rose from the dead at daybreak will of his mercy vouchsafe to call this poor soul from the tomb of this poor body, and from the shades of this

mortality into his heavenly light. I do not wish to tire tender youth with vain watching. Let the others, too, take turns sleeping. I need only one watcher, to read the sacred page.¹²⁵

- When the night had passed – it was about four o'clock – and all were
 5 come, he ordered read the entire psalm spoken by the Lord when praying on
 the cross.¹²⁶ After it was ended, he bade them bring a taper and a crucifix.
 And taking the taper he said, 'The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom
 shall I fear?' Kissing the crucifix, he said, 'The Lord is the strength of my life:
 of whom shall I be afraid?'¹²⁷ Presently he folded his hands on his breast, in
 10 the manner of one praying, and with his eyes turned to heaven said, 'Lord
 Jesus, receive my spirit.'¹²⁸ And straightway he closed his eyes as though
 he were going to sleep, and at that moment expired with a slight gasp. You
 would have said he had fallen asleep, not died.¹²⁹

Marcolphus I've never heard of a death less troublesome.

- 15 **Phaedrus** He was like that all his life.¹³⁰ Each of these men was my friend.
 Perhaps I'm not a fair judge of which one died in a manner more becoming a
 Christian. You, being unprejudiced, will decide that better.

Marcolphus I'll do so, but at my leisure.

NOTES

- 1 These opening lines are nearly the same as those in 'A Marriage in Name Only' 844:3-4.
- 2 In Greek legend Trophonius was swallowed up by the earth. Thereafter he was consulted as an oracle, but those who visited him returned from his cave melancholy and discouraged. See *Adagia* I vii 77, where the cave is compared to St Patrick's cave, so-called, in Ireland; on this, 'A Pilgrimage' n186. Cf *Moriae encomium* LB IV 405C / ASD IV-3 71:13 / CWE 27 86.
- 3 Phaedrus means 'radiant,' 'cheerful'; see 'The Cheating Horse-Dealer' 558:3-8. The origin of the name Marcolphus is uncertain. It appears in one of the letters in *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* (2.69), a book known to Erasmus. He may also have seen the Latin text of the medieval *Salomon et Marcolphus*, in which Marcolphus is a glib and impertinent jester. See the edition by Walter Benary (Heidelberg 1914). English, French, and German versions exist, some verse and others prose; an English version was printed in 1492 at Antwerp.
- 4 The name Balearicus is adapted from Βελίαρ 'Satan,' 'Belial,' or 'Antichrist' (see 2 Cor 6:15), from a Hebrew word meaning 'uselessness,' 'corruption'; hence it is appropriate to George. The name Montius occurs once in Erasmus' correspondence (Ep 759). Neither George nor Cornelius can be identified with persons Erasmus knew, but he was certainly acquainted with men of both kinds. We meet a number of them in the *Colloquies* alone. George may remind us in some respects of the Johann Poppenruyter at whom *Enchiridion* is believed to have been directed. See O. Schottenloher 'Erasmus, Johann Poppenreuter und die Entstehung des *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*' ARG 45 (1954) 109-16.

- 5 Lines 5–35 are the only lines from Erasmus quoted in *The Oxford Book of Death* ed D.J. Enright (Oxford 1983) 46.
- 6 ‘Death is the most terrible of all things; for it is the end’ (Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.6 1115a26–7). Erasmus begins *De praeparatione ad mortem* with this quotation. Phaëdrus, who voices Erasmus’ opinions consistently in this colloquy, assures Marcolphus that expectation of death is worse than experience of it. For ‘the sense of death is most in apprehension’ (*Measure for Measure* 3.1.77). Bacon’s famous essay on death contains a Latin sentence, ‘Pompa mortis magis terret quam mors ipsa,’ that looks at first glance like a memory of Erasmus’ line 9, ‘Iter ad mortem durius quam ipse mors,’ but see Quintilian 8.5.5; the dictum may be proverbial. Bacon attributed it to ‘him that spake only as a philosopher and natural man.’ It may be derived from Seneca *Epistulae morales* 24.14; Erasmus admired Seneca’s essay *De brevitae vitae* (Allen Ep 2091:205–7).

What Erasmus urges through Phaëdrus in lines 9–13 is something more than Senecan Stoicism or the courage and moral integrity of Plato’s Socrates in *Phaedo*. When he says one should dismiss from his thought the horror and imagination of death, he intends, as his subsequent words show, that this advice should be understood in Christian terms. ‘All hope is in Christ alone,’ Erasmus wrote to Beatus Rhenanus in 1518 concerning his own poor health. In his youth he used to shudder at the mention of death, but gradually overcame this dread and learned better than to measure human happiness by length of days. After all, he adds, he has passed his fiftieth year, an age attained by few, so he cannot complain (Allen Ep 867:258–72 / CWE Ep 867:278–92).

For an introduction to the scope and power of death in the history of ideas and of sentiments in the late medieval and Renaissance eras, see T.S.R. Boase *Death in the Middle Ages* (London 1972, with many illustrations) and John Huizinga *The Waning of the Middle Ages* trans F. Hopman (London 1924). See also Holbein’s series of woodcuts on this theme, and consult L.P. Kurtz *The Dance of Death and the Macabre Spirit in European Literature* (New York 1934); J.M. Clark *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Glasgow 1950). We infer with good reason that such disasters as the Black Death in the fourteenth century and recurrent plagues and epidemics took their toll morally and socially as well as physically. Allusions to these matters in the pages of Erasmus, as of others who wrote on contemporary life and manners, often reflect what a modern reader may think a strange preoccupation with death. Preoccupation it was, but unavoidably and properly, given the nature of their experience.

Certain exceptions or apparent exceptions to these generalizations can be found. Petrarch, for example, writes at times like a pious, orthodox Christian (his attitudes towards death are compared with those of Erasmus by E.W. Kohls ‘*Meditatio mortis chez Pétrarque et Erasme*’ in *Colloquia Erasmi Turonensis* 1 303–11), but sometimes what he says on death differs from what we expect to find and usually do find in fourteenth-century texts. For a well-documented study of some other late medieval Italian considerations of death see G.W. McClure ‘The Art of Mourning: Autobiographical Writings on The Loss of a Son in Italian Humanist Thought (1400–1461)’ *Renaissance Quarterly* 39 (1986) 440–75.

- 7 Cf *Enchiridion* LB V 4D / Holborn 26:25–7 / CWE 66 28. On permanent separation of soul and body as the definition of death see Plato *Phaedo* 64A–E, 67D; Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 1.74–7; Augustine *De civitate Dei* 13.9 and 10. On the soul see ‘The New Mother’ 596:24–605:2 above.
- 8 So *De praeparatione ad mortem* warns against having too many doctors in attendance. They will only give conflicting advice, disagree with one another, and confuse or distress the invalid (LB V 1312A–B / ASD V-1 378:965–379:978). On their promptness in demanding fees cf *Adagia* IV viii 36 and *Apophthegmata* LB IV 132E; with ‘enough to kill even a healthy man,’ compare Martial 1.47 and *Adagia* II vii 7.
- 9 Proverbial; *Adagia* III ix 12, 53, 86; Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 1.5.9. With the physicians’ announcement that it is now time to turn to spiritual concerns, cf ‘The Seraphic Funeral’ 1000:28–34.
- 10 Bloating
- 11 A common procedure, even a public one, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See nn91 and 92 below.
- 12 Earned rewards deserved for one’s good works, ‘counted unto him for righteousness’ (Rom 4:3) when done for God; in short, good deeds fulfilling divine commandments. Merits, as part of the penitential system, were repudiated by Protestant reformers – most clearly by Luther – on the ground that no human being had claim to a divine reward, however good his works, all of which are in fact tainted. He can only rely on the divine mercy. Cf Cornelius’ words at 777:26–37.
- 13 A series of thirty daily requiem masses for the repose of a soul. The term is used again at 777:21.
- 14 The most prominent mendicant orders: Franciscan, Dominican, Carmelite, and the Augustinian Hermit Friars. Of these the *Colloquies* have most to say of Franciscans; see ‘The Well-to-do Beggars,’ ‘The Sermon,’ and ‘The Seraphic Funeral’; on Dominicans ‘Military Affairs’ n24 and ‘The Seraphic Funeral’ n51; on Carmelites ‘The Apotheosis of Reuchlin’ n3; on Augustinians n43 below. Bernardine and Vincent are common names of Franciscans and Dominicans, in honour of St Bernardine of Siena (d 1444), a famous Franciscan preacher, and St Vincent Ferrer (d 1419), Dominican missionary and preacher. Alexander Müller or Molitor, warden of the Franciscans in Basel in 1526, has been suggested as the model for Erasmus’ Bernardine in the colloquy (Smith *Key* 43), but Erasmus hardly needed a specific individual as model. Bernardine is cast as a type rather than an individual. With Vincent the case is altered because, as Allen (Ep 1196 introduction) and Smith both note, he can be convincingly identified with Vincentius Theoderici, formerly of the Dominican *studium* in Paris and later of Louvain. He was severely critical of Erasmus, who ridicules him in this colloquy and in a letter which speaks of him as ‘an ignoramus, a natural booby’ (Allen Ep 1144:24 / CWE Ep 1144:28). With help from others Theoderici wrote a tract against Erasmus’ *Exomologesis* and *De esu carniū* but was forbidden to publish it (Allen Epp 1571:65n, 1582:1–2).
Another suggestion is that these lines ‘would appear to have given Shakespeare the names of his murderer and his duke, Barnardine and Vincentio’ in *Measure for Measure*; also that the idea of making Isabella in the play a votaress of St Clare may have come from this colloquy, in which George’s elder daughter is promised

- to St Clare (771:26); see Kenneth Muir in *Notes and Queries* 201 (1956) 424. One of Erasmus' most irritating and detested critics, Nicolaas Baechem of Louvain, was a Carmelite; on him see 'Rash Vows' n14.
- 15 A common term for *captatores testamenti*, sycophants who are constantly at the deathbeds of the rich in hopes of a legacy. See *Adagia* I vii 14 and *Dialogus bilinguium et trilinguium* in Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 208:82 / CWE 7 337.
- 16 On this rite see n109 below.
- 17 These contentious friars are a ludicrous contrast with the two Franciscans in 'The Well-to-do Beggars,' where the friars are clearly superior to the parish priest in learning and morals. The terms 'monk' and 'friar' were often used interchangeably. The interchangeability and distinctions are discussed in chapter 5 of R.J. Schoeck *Erasmus of Europe: The Making of a Humanist 1467–1500* (Edinburgh 1990) especially 114 and n9.
- 18 Friction between regular and secular clergy had long existed, both as a fact and as a subject for satire and complaint, as these pages and others remind us. Erasmus observes elsewhere that although the various orders of mendicants quarrel among themselves, they present a united front against the seculars, as they do in this scene (cf *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 125D; 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n4). Such animosities are a well-worn topic in histories of the orders, and were still a subject for attention at the Fifth Lateran Council, which in 1516 decreed that neither Eucharist nor extreme unction could be administered by regulars to a dying person whose confession they had heard unless the parish priest had without legitimate reason refused to administer them (session 11 [On religious and their privileges]; Tanner I 647). The priest in 'The Funeral' shares the common clerical resentment at intrusion into his territory. One of many charges was that the mendicants lured penitents away from parish priests, who had the primary right to hear their confessions; see Knowles *ROE* II 101–3. Erasmus disliked the tendency of Dominicans and Franciscans to specialize in hearing confessions, though he allows that the laziness or incompetence of priests, and the failure of bishops to correct the situation, were often to blame. A strong passage in *Adagia* II viii 65 reproves the aggressiveness of these mendicants. In 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' Erasmus strongly defends 'The Funeral' both as a reproach to the vanity of rich men and as a condemnation of unctuous, grasping friars. He denies that he defames the religious orders as such, insisting that he merely calls attention to one of their notorious faults (1104:29–1105:11 below).
- 19 Vincent is *baccalaureus formatus*, literally 'formed bachelor,' a phrase used also in Allen Ep 143:112–3 and *Adagia* II v 98 LB II 582F. This means that he is already *baccalaureus biblicus*, has lectured on the Bible for a year and on another book for a second year, has completed his studies of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* and taken part in disputations, and now after half a dozen years of graduate study at the University of Paris is about to become licentiate in theology. When he does so he will be qualified to teach theology; with still further study he can become a doctor of theology. See Farge *Orthodoxy and Reform* 16–28.
- 20 Because he is too ignorant of Latin
- 21 *mamzares*, from Hebrew *mamzer* (Deut 23:2). See Alexander Souter *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D.* (Oxford 1949).

- 22 On concubinage and clerical incontinence, and Erasmus' opinions on these subjects, see the introduction to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 279–81 and 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n6.
'A priest,' Erasmus advised, 'should entertain himself with good authors instead of a concubine' ('The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1100:22–3).
- 23 Proverbial; see *Adagia* I ix 28 (misnumbered 38 in LB II), an entertaining account in which Erasmus compares the shrillness and persistence of the cicada's noise to the outbursts of over-sensitive poets; on this allusion see Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 74–5. *Adagia* I ix 100 is also about the cicada.
- 24 Proverbial; not in *Adagia* in this form, but cf I x 41.
- 25 Francis and Dominic were renowned for sanctity but not for learning.
- 26 Nowadays, Erasmus and More and other like-minded men agreed, there were too many priests, monks, and mendicant friars. Fewer but better ones were needed. See 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1100:37–8; Allen Epp 1747:105, 1891:214–28, 2700:109–11; *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 647E; *De concordia* LB v 498D. Cf More *Utopia* Yale CWM 4 130, 131. Knowles estimates that there were about 3,000 friars in England c 1500 (ROE III 52).
- 27 The same metaphor is used in describing the earliest Benedictines and friars in Allen Ep 858:525 / CWE Ep 858:567, the prefatory letter to the new edition of *Enchiridion* (1518), and again, at length, in *De concordia* (1533) LB v 484A–F.
- 28 Cf the verses on the orders quoted in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* XII (1911) 356: *Bernardus valles, montes Benedictus amabat, / Oppida Franciscus, celebres Dominicus urbes* 'Bernard loved the valleys, Benedict the mountains, / Francis the towns, Dominic the populous cities.'
- 29 Critics of the mendicants liked to point to this change as a serious ethical lapse with deplorable consequences. Note Erasmus' remark in Allen Ep 2700:94–7. As early as 1243 the chronicler Matthew Paris, a Benedictine, accused English Franciscans and Dominicans of haunting the bedsides of sick folk 'in order that they may gape after gain, extort confessions and hidden testaments, commending only themselves and their own Order' (*Chronica maiora* Rolls Series 57, 7 vols [London 1872–83] IV 280; trans G.G. Coulton *Europe's Apprenticeship* [London 1940] 253). When Erasmus in 1511 ventured to ask Colet for financial aid to Richard Croke, then a young scholar of promise, later a teacher of Greek at Cambridge and a canon of Christ Church, Oxford, Colet refused: 'I do not stand by the bedsides of the dying . . . I do not seek to become the confidant of rich men, or praise their vices and infirmities, or bid them compound their crimes by putting money at my disposal' (Allen Epp 227:24–8, 230:32–8 / CWE Epp 227:30–4, 230:38–44). Hostility to mendicants existed long before Wyclif and Hus lived, but their criticism was typical. Wyclif was at first friendly with the friars at Oxford but later, when they opposed his theology, turned against them, finally becoming almost fanatical in his denunciations. See Herbert B. Workman *John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church* 2 vols (Oxford 1926) II 92–108. In England the line runs through Wyclif's followers, the Lollards, to the early sixteenth-century Protestants. Judgments of monks and friars similar to Wyclif's were often expressed in more subtle and ironic, but arguably more persuasive, language by Erasmus in the *Colloquies* and other writings. That language is said by an eminent modern historian, himself a monk, to have 'penetrated deep into the consciousness and memories of his age

- ... It was a more civilized treatment of the topic than Wyclif's, a more Fabian approach, but the end would have been no less inevitable' (Knowles ROE III 151). But for Wyclif Erasmus had no use. See 'A Pilgrimage' n146.
- 30 In 1482 the faculty of theology in Paris condemned a claim made in a Lenten sermon by a Franciscan that members of the order were authentic priests and curates and better than parish priests, because Franciscans held their power from the pope, parish priests only from a bishop (*Collectio judiciorum de novis erroribus* ... ed C. du Plessis d'Argentré, 3 vols [Paris 1728–36; repr Brussels 1966] 1 part 2 305).
- 31 In saying this the priest is within his rights. Preaching was one of the principal activities of mendicant friars (see 'A Fish Diet' n219). They were trained for the work and were often popular with those who heard them, but they incurred the suspicion and hostility of parish clergy. As a result their freedom to preach was curtailed severely by the bull *Super cathedram* of Boniface VIII in 1300, which forbade them to preach in any parish church without permission of the priest or bishop. This bull was annulled by Boniface's successor, Benedict XI in 1304, but reinstituted by the next pope, Clement V, in 1311 (the Council of Vienne decree [10]; Tanner I 365–9).
- 32 Of arts or divinity, probably the latter. The *Reformatio Sigismundi* (1438) stipulated that every parish priest should be at least *baccalaureus* (Strauss *Manifestations of Discontent* 120). This was a counsel of perfection.
- 33 St Martin of Tours (d 397), bishop of Tours and founder of the first monastery in France; a famous preacher and missionary. See *Adagia* III iii 1 LB II 772D.
- 34 Hints of this are found in 'A Fish Diet' 707:2–21; see also 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' n15 and 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n6.
- 35 Cf Allen Ep 2700:73–92.
- 36 The priest is not a bachelor, but he remembers a tag from Horace *Satires* 1.7.3.
- 37 Despite the restrictions on their preaching in parish churches, mendicant friars could still practise their other specialty, the hearing of confessions, if certain conditions were met. A Christian was required to confess all his sins to his own parish priest at least once a year. This was usually done at Easter. Confession could also be made to friars, but at least one confession annually must be made to the priest. See 'Youth' n64. The conflict between George's confessing to the Franciscan and the priest's insistence on his right to hear it is resolved by George's offer to confess anew to the priest. Having won his point, the priest now allows the earlier confession to stand, then administers extreme unction and communion, collects his fee, and departs.
- 38 That is, agreed to spare him the repeating of it
- 39 Gave him extreme unction. See n109 below.
- 40 See 'The Old Men's Chat' n70.
- 41 'The fifth wheel of a wagon' was a common phrase for something insignificant and unneeded, used for example in the thirteenth-century *Chronicle* of the Franciscan Salimbene, translated by G.G. Coulton in *From St Francis to Dante* (rev ed London 1907; repr Philadelphia 1972) 53, 92, 155, 326.
- 42 A double meaning is hinted, for dicing was a dissipation of which friars and monks were often accused.
- 43 'Augustinian,' referring to an order, identifies one of the societies professing to follow the teachings or rule of St Augustine. Here the allusion is to the Hermit Friars of St Augustine. Luther belonged to one of the fifteenth-century

German reformed congregations of this order. Despite the name 'friars,' his order was monastic; he was a monk and calls himself a monk; he was never a mendicant. The Augustinian canons regular, of whom Erasmus was one, were neither monks nor friars but, as he often notes, had characteristics of both: it was an 'amphibian' society as he likes to say, a distinctive order within the Augustinian family (cf 'A Pilgrimage' n46). Carmelites, who claimed descent from the prophet Elijah, boasted of being the most ancient of all the orders. Neither the Augustinian Hermit Friars nor the Carmelites were originally mendicants. Accordingly they were scorned by the Franciscans and Dominicans, as in the 'gladiatorial combat' that follows here. The Crutched Friars' attitude towards the other four orders present is 'a plague on [all] your houses,' an attitude illustrated likewise in verses quoted by Huizinga *Waning of the Middle Ages* (n6 above) 161 and the execration of mendicants by the dying poet Raminagrobis in Rabelais *Gargantua and Pantagruel* 3.21.

- 44 *impressionem*. Cf Cicero *Ad familiares* 5.2.8.
- 45 *syncretismus*, used of those who were formerly enemies but then joined forces in order to oppose a common foe. See *Adagia* i i 11 and *Querela pacis* LB IV 638B / ASD IV-2 685-7 / CWE 27 314. Franciscans and Dominicans were natural rivals; competition between them had existed early in their history and continued in more or less the same manner in later generations. But sometimes these older orders stood together, as they do in this scene, against other orders. On the Carmelites see also H.C. Lea *A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church* 3 vols (Philadelphia 1896) III 253-77. Other allusions to wrangling friars are met in Erasmus' writings; for example *Enchiridion* LB v 45D-F / Holborn 100:26-101:12 / CWE 66 15; *Querela pacis* LB IV 629B-C / ASD IV-2 67:178-68:202 / CWE 27 298; *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 125C-D. On Franciscan history in general consult Moorman or Raphael M. Huber *A Documented History of the Franciscan Order, 1182-1517* (Milwaukee and Washington 1944); and see the notes to 'The Seraphic Funeral.' For the Dominicans see William A. Hinnebusch *The History of the Dominican Order* 2 vols (New York 1966-73). Hinnebusch's *The Dominicans: A Short History* (New York 1975) has brief chapters on the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
- 46 *Querela pacis* LB IV 640A-B / ASD IV-2 94:794-7 / CWE 27 318; *De bello Turcico* LB v 359B; *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 241F. The barbarous conduct of common soldiers, which we hear of in 'Military Affairs,' 'The Soldier and the Carthusian,' 'Charon,' and 'Cyclops,' was more destructive, but it is to be remembered that generals get their training by sharing the deeds of such 'preliminary campaigning' (see n81 below).
- 47 He was clever at getting 'dead pays,' appropriating pay for soldiers dead or discharged or for some other reason not under his command. 'Dead pays' was once a common term; see John Smythe *Certain Discourses Military* (1590) ed J.R. Hale (Washington 1964) xxxix n59.
- 48 The Beguines were a religious society of women who lived in community but without vows and devoted themselves to good works. They could own private property and leave the order if they chose. They were mainly in the Netherlands, where today the Begijnhof in Amsterdam commemorates their houses, but were also found in Cologne, Paris, and other cities. Their chapel in Amsterdam (1419), rebuilt several times, became a Protestant church in the sixteenth century. A similar society for men, the Beghards, was established

in the fourteenth century. See R.W. Southern *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (London 1970) 319–30; Ernest W. McDonnell *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ 1954; repr New York 1969).

- 49 *Adagia* I x 17; cf I x 31, II v 22. The folly of forcing a son or daughter to enter the religious life, as George intends, without proper consideration of their wishes or welfare, is almost an obsession with Erasmus, who warns against it in the conclusion of *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 722D–724B. Compare Cornelius' advice to his wife at 778:32–4 below. The opposite difficulty, of young persons having rash desires to enter monasteries or nunneries, is the theme of 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' and 'The Repentant Girl.'
- 50 Acceptable moral character and intelligence were requirements to which, canonically, no exceptions could be made. See 'A Fish Diet' n306. As for illegitimacy or age, a papal dispensation could be sought. Since the canonical age for ordination to the priesthood was fixed at twenty-five in 1179 (Third Lateran Council, canon 3; Tanner I 212–13), and the older son is only nineteen, the need for a dispensation is clear.
- 51 'Let those who think masses and rites for relatives are of no benefit to the departed, do for the living poor what most people command to be done after death. Do not interfere with those who are persuaded that the good works which, when living, they took care to do, are beneficial to the dead.' (Allen Ep 2853:17–20). So Erasmus writes in 1533 to an unidentified person or group who sought his opinions on ecclesiastical reforms – some quite radical – advocated or introduced.
- 52 The Scala Sancta, marble steps to the papal chapel in the Lateran palace; believed to have been brought to Rome by St Helena from Jerusalem, where they had been in Pilate's palace and thus trodden by the feet of Christ. They were resited nearby in the late sixteenth century. Pilgrims ascend them on their knees. Arnold von Harff says he was told in Rome that whoever climbed the steps on his knees released a soul from purgatory (ed Malcolm Letts, Hakluyt Society 2nd series 94 [London 1946] 19). Erasmus alludes to this belief in *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB 1312C / ASD v-1 380:988–9. Luther crawled up those steps, kissing each one, in 1510, but the experience ended with disturbing doubt rather than exultation. See R.H. Bainton *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York 1950) 50–1.
- 53 Horace *Satires* 1.9.20–1
- 54 That is, the older to the Poor Clares, the Second Order of St Francis (named after St Clare of Assisi); and the younger to the Third Order of St Dominic, of which St Catherine was a member.
- 55 See 772:22–3 below. Those who bequeath so much wealth to religious that they leave their children impoverished are condemned in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 258F, 280F.
- 56 *uncia* (English 'ounce'), literally 'a twelfth.' The entire estate is divided into twelve shares.
- 57 See a decree of Clement v forbidding friars to use devious means of arranging that legacies be left to them (Council of Vienne decree [31]; Tanner I 387).
- 58 Writing in 1532 to a young priest he knew well, Erasmus speaks of reports that Franciscans persuade rich and ignorant men that by being buried in Franciscan

- dress and giving money they will participate in all good works of the order (Allen Ep 2700:73–8).
- 59 In Roman law a testament was invalid if it deprived heirs of estates to which they were legally entitled. See Cicero *In Verrem actio secunda* 1.42.107.
- 60 Cf Job 9:32.
- 61 Men who prescribe over-elaborate arrangements for their funerals are ridiculed in *Moriae encomium* (LB IV 446B–447A / ASD IV-3 126:23–8 and note / CWE 27 115–16). An eloquent passage on this folly in More's *Supplication of Souls* (1529) is reprinted by P.S. and H.M. Allen eds *Sir Thomas More: Selections* (Oxford 1924) 101. One of the new translations from Lucian by Erasmus, added to the second edition (Paris 1514) of the Latin versions made by him and More and first published in 1506 (Paris: Josse Bade) was *De luctu*, a clever and characteristic satire of the superstition and hypocrisy of funeral customs. Text of the translation in LB I 194A–196E / ASD I-1 394–8.
- 62 Cherubim, seraphim, thrones, dominations, virtues, powers, principalities, archangels, angels. Beliefs or traditions about them derive principally from the *Celestial Hierarchy* attributed to pseudo-Dionysius; on him see 'The New Mother' n51. Number was profoundly significant in religious symbolism, whether in language as in Dante or in pictorial art. Every instructed Christian in Erasmus' time knew – and accepted that it was worth knowing – that the Persons of the Trinity were three, the apostles twelve, the wounds of Christ and the books of Moses five, the angelic choirs nine, the sorrows of Mary seven, and so on. The symbolism of numbers in a pageant or a funeral as elaborate as George's is to be would not only have been intelligible to many of the spectators but a source of pleasure and of religious satisfaction. Analysis of number symbolism is as ancient as Pythagoras. Vincent R. Hopper *Medieval Number Symbolism* (New York 1938) is an introduction to the subject, and see E.R. Curtius *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* trans Willard R. Trask (New York 1953) 501–14.
- 63 Matt 26:14–15
- 64 The former were hired for the occasion, according to custom. 'Dressed in black' was also customary; 'We mourn in black' (Shakespeare *1 Henry VI* 1.1.17), though there were exceptions; for burial of infants the priest could be vested in white. At the funeral of Charles VI of France, members of the Parlement of Paris wore red (Boase [n6 above] figs 99, 100). Aldermen in London who marched as mourners at the funeral of another alderman sometimes wore their violet gowns if they did not have black (*The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563* ed J.G. Nichols, Camden Society 1st series 42 [London 1848; repr New York 1968] xxiv; the *Diary* mentions well over 200 funerals and describes many of them, and for information about funeral processions in London during the years it covers it is invaluable, as is the editor's introductory 'Note upon Funerals,' xx–xxxii).
- 65 Another standard feature of funeral processions honouring monarchs, statesmen, or warriors was their favourite charger, either riderless (as apparently George's is) or ridden by a page but symbolically riderless nonetheless. In the funeral procession for Sir Philip Sidney in 1586 his horse was 'led by a footman, a page riding, trailing a broken lance' (as is shown in Thomas Lant *Sequitur celebritas et pompa funeris* [of Sir Philip Sidney] ... with

many illustrations [London 1587; STC 15224] 3). For the riderless horse in Queen Elizabeth's funeral procession in 1603 see the drawing in William Camden's *Funeral Procession of Queen Elizabeth* in Roland M. Frye *The Renaissance Hamlet* (Princeton 1984) 98, 99. The riderless, decorated horse of Charles v is shown in a contemporary drawing reproduced in B.H. Kervyn de Lettenhove *La toison d'or* 2nd ed (Brussels 1907) facing page 90.

- 66 The cloth or coverlet draped over the coffin
- 67 Paros, an island in the Aegean, was famous for its white marble.
- 68 Erasmus deplored the exhibition in churches of banners, arms, and other memorials of eminent personages. Yes, you can be buried beside the high altar if you pay enough (*Adagia* I ix 12 LB II 338E). Cf 'The Godly Feast' 199:18–23 and *Modus orandi Deum* LB V 1121B. The symbolism in the rest of this paragraph would have been recognizable enough to many of Erasmus' readers, but the irony of it depends on the context.
- 69 Pelicans were common, like other birds and beasts, on tombs (*Modus orandi Deum* LB V 1121B). In Christian art the pelican was a symbol of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, because it was thought that the pelican fed its offspring with blood from its own breast, and was thus an antetype of the Eucharist. (Cf Ps 102:6 [101:7 Vulg]: 'I am like a pelican of the wilderness.') Sometimes it is shown above the cross, as in Francesco Pesellino's painting *Crucifixion with St Jerome and St Francis*; see plate IV in George Ferguson *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (New York 1954). But to those who knew Pliny's *Naturalis historia* as well as Erasmus did, there could be a very different reason for the appropriateness of the pelican's neck as George's crest. Pliny says (10.131) that the pelican is insatiably greedy, and Erasmus notes that it makes a noise like an ass's braying (*scholia* on the revised edition of Jerome's letters [Basel 1524–6] II 1128).
- 70 The boar too is known to heraldry. King Richard III of England had a lion and a boar as his crest. A boar is merely a wild pig, and a pig in Christian art represents gluttony and sensuality (see 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n43). If George's shield shows three boars, these may be intended to suggest his fierce courage, yet it is just as likely that Erasmus intends them as signs of ruthless rapacity.
- 71 The rules of heraldry disapproved of having metal on metal. If so, 'gold in a field of silver' would be another example of ostentation.
- 72 *equus auratus*, a pun on *auratus* 'gilded'; *auratus* and 'knight' are synonymous here. See *Paraphrasis in Elegantias Vallae* ASD I-4 250:173. Gilded knights were so called 'from their gilt Spurres, which they were wont to have put on at their Creation' (John Selden *Titles of Honor* 2nd ed [1631] 437). After More was knighted in 1521, Erasmus' next letter to him is addressed *equiti aurato* (Allen Ep 1220).
- 73 In Christian symbolism it signifies sin and the devil, but in heraldry the leopard is a lion 'passant gardant,' walking with head facing the spectator (as in the arms of England).
- 74 Burial of parts of the body in different places, or even in different countries, was not unheard of. Henry I of England furnishes one example (Boase [n6 above] 113), Henry VIII another. His entrails and bowels were removed 'after the corps was cold, and seen by the Lords of the Privy Council' and other nobles, and then 'were honorably buried in the chappel within the said place

[the palace of Whitehall at Westminster], with all manner of ceremonies thereunto belonging' (Strype *Ecclesiastical Memorials* [Oxford 1822] II part 2 289). The corpse was then wrapped, embalmed, cased in lead and buried after many ceremonies and three days of procession, in the choir of St George's Chapel in Windsor.

- 75 Since Erasmus had lived in Venice for eight months in 1508, the allusions in these paragraphs are very likely memories of his own observations there (see the introduction to 'Penny-Pinching' 979–82). His business in Venice was to prepare an enlarged edition of the *Adagia*. For the meaning and the pomp and circumstance of such Venetian events see the impressive book by Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton 1981).
- Sir Richard Guildford comments on the great number of guilds in religious processions he saw in Venice in 1506; see *The Pylgrymage of Sir Richard Gylfforde* ed Henry Ellis, Camden Society 51 (London 1851) 8–9. Compare Wey's description of a doge's funeral there in 1462 (*Itineraries* [Roxburghe Club, London 1857] 85); on Guildford and Wey see 'Rash Vows' n3. Coryat in 1608 saw in Venice 'a marvelous solemn procession' consisting of 'every order and fraternity of religious men in the whole city' (*Crudities* I 367).
- 76 Often used by Erasmus as a synonym for 'innumerable' or 'a great many.' It occurs in another passage critical of funeral processions (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 809B). Sometimes it is ironical. As the lexicons suggest, its use as a figure of speech may have arisen because the Roman cohort originally consisted of six hundred soldiers.
- 77 Because they carried torches or were accompanied by torchbearers. Chimeras were mythical monsters with heads of lions, bodies of goats, and tails of dragons. They were armed with flames.
- 78 Ie the friars; see n17 above.
- 79 Marching order is ruled by prevailing notions of hierarchy, history, privilege, and local custom. In this paragraph 'front,' 'rear,' 'first,' 'last' (or 'lowest') can refer either to status and dignity or to place in the procession, depending on the speaker's meaning. Since the Venetian procession honours a cobbler, it is logical that fellow members of his guild should be the chief mourners. Therefore they march last (*inferne*), in the most honourable position; fullers and tanners 'up front' (*superne*). But when priests and clerks march in 'first' place at the front of the procession (*primus*), they march in the 'lowest' or least honourable position. The addition of *hoc est primum* after 'lowest' (*infimum*) in the September 1531 and subsequent editions makes this clear. In *Moriae encomium* when Folly reminds her audience that Ecclesiastes (1:17) says 'I gave my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly' she is audaciously affirming that folly is superior and therefore is in last place (LB IV 490E / ASD IV-3 180:943–8 / CWE 27 143). In modern academic processions persons with lower degrees (or none at all as yet) march first, those with higher degrees after them. This is also the established rule in all liturgical processions. In Robert Goulet's *Compendium universitatis Parisiensis* (1517), the oldest printed history of the university, the order of precedence in university processions differs from what we find in the colloquy and the passage in *Moriae encomium*; see the translation by Robert B. Burke (Philadelphia and London 1928) 78–80. Franciscans, Augustinians, Carmelites, and Dominicans march ahead of masters of arts; then come other

religious orders; then bachelors, doctors, rector and other university officials. Bringing up the rear is the book trade – booksellers, binders, paper-merchants, illuminators, parchmenters, and scribes. Were these an afterthought, an addition to fill up the ranks, or were they included because they were useful servitors of the university, though not members of it?

To infer then that the most important person or group in a formal procession was always last would be a serious error. Other considerations or *ad hoc* decisions could overrule precedents. George, for instance, pays no attention to established rules about whether Dominicans or Franciscans should march first – whether that means ahead of everybody else or merely ahead of other religious. He simply tells them to cast lots. A far more common and important factor, we can suppose, was the number and variety of persons in the procession and how elaborate the whole spectacle was to be. In the ordering of the funeral for Stephen Gardiner in 1555, friars and monks march first, followed by clerks and priests. The chief mourner comes next, then the lesser mourners; then nobles; finally servants (*Letters* 502–17). Similarly in the funeral processions of nobles and even kings and many other worthies, as described in Machyn's diary (n64 above), the chief mourner is never, or very seldom, first or last. He is somewhere near the middle. He seems in his official capacity to symbolize the apex or crest of grief, those ahead of him preparing the way, in some sense preparing the spectators for his appearance. Thereafter curiosity or emotion can subside gradually. The procession is not ended; there are still more marchers, banners, horsemen, decorated wagons, minor mourners to see. These deductions, at any rate, seem justified after examination of the evidence offered by accounts of many sixteenth-century funeral processions.

- 80 A plenary indulgence, remitting temporal punishment in purgatory. 'Some, by means of a purchased document, promise freedom from purgatorial fire, but I fear this is not done to relieve the sick man but is a shameless way of deceiving him when he is at the point of death' (*De praeparatione ad mortem* LB v 1316F / ASD v-1 388:227–9).
- 81 See the colloquies 'Military Affairs,' 'The Soldier and the Carthusian,' 'Charon,' and 'Cyclops,' and *Querela pacis* passim. 'War covers the dregs of every crime. A general is not considered competent nowadays unless trained for his present rank by such preliminary campaigning' ('The Knight without a Horse' 887:14–16).
- 82 In this case forgery, an offence with which religious orders, particularly the mendicant friars, were sometimes charged; for instance by Castiglione in *The Courtier* 3.20. The charge was easier to make than to prove.
- 83 Such foolish promises are of course useless (*In psalmum quartum concio* LB v 290F) – even, said Luther, if the pope himself pledged his soul for them (*Ninety-five Theses* [1517]; Kidd *Documents* 24 no 11 thesis 52). Erasmus' word for 'hell' here is 'Orcus,' who was god of death and the underworld.
- 84 One might have expected 'Crutched Friars' instead of 'Carthusians' here, since the former have been named as the fifth order, but all early editions agree on 'Carthusians.' The warranties (*cautiones*) or pledges to which allusion is made may be 'letters of fraternity,' by which a lay person, by promise of a gift of money to the order, could be buried in Franciscan habit and receive from the friars prayers which would help him after death. That such pledges were

made is repeated by Erasmus in 1532, who names the Franciscan order (Allen Ep 2700:73–8). Cf ‘The Seraphic Funeral’ 1007:25–1008:6 and *passim*; and see Moorman 120, 514–5.

85 On these see the introduction to ‘Military Affairs.’

86 Matt 13:12; Luke 19:26

87 A symbol of penance and of mortality. For detailed instructions about monastic use see *Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc* ed and trans David Knowles (London 1951) 122.

88 See n58 above and *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1305E / ASD V-1 366:635–8. The custom of putting a Franciscan robe on a dying man is treated at length in ‘The Seraphic Funeral.’ John Bale in *The Image of Both Churches* (c 1548) associates this custom particularly with kings and warriors and other ‘strong men,’ citing ‘The Funeral’ (*Select Works* ed H. Christmas, rs 1 [Cambridge 1849] 1, 329).

89 For a dying person to have a crucifix and taper held near him, or given him to hold, was another ancient custom; cf 779:6 below. A picture in the Grimani breviary (c 1500) shows a dying man with crucifix and taper held at the bedside, notaries and physicians nearby, while an angel drives a devil away (Boase [n6 above] fig 105). Pictures of saints too may be shown to the dying, to fortify them against despair (*De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1314B / ASD V-1 384:84–90).

The Jacobean dramatist John Webster borrows directly from this scene in *The White Devil* 5.3.135–45, where the death of Brachiano, with two friars in attendance, is enacted on the inner stage. Latin sentences are lifted from 774:35–775:14 here. See A.W. Reed in the *Times Literary Supplement* 14 June 1947 page 295.

90 With the imagery compare Prov 30:5; Eph 6:11–17.

91 Not unusual, Erasmus implies in *Exomologesis* LB V 160A–B.

92 To establish the cause of death. Erasmus, after describing Colet’s final illness, takes the trouble to add that the autopsy furnished no new information but indicated a disordered liver (Allen Ep 1211:382–3 / CWE Ep 1211:415–17). The physicians’ assurance to George’s wife that ‘anatomies’ were a procedure *honoris causa* may have been prudent under the circumstances, but hardly necessary: relatives sometimes requested them out of curiosity. At public anatomies, on the other hand, the bodies dissected were commonly those of criminals. The cadaver anatomized in Rembrandt’s famous painting was that of a criminal who was hanged the day before. Public anatomies in seventeenth-century Amsterdam and elsewhere were festive events. See William S. Heckscher’s brilliant book *Rembrandt’s ‘Anatomy of Dr. Nicolaas Tulp’: An Iconological Study* (New York 1958).

93 Proverbial; *Adagia* i i 60

94 With this bold claim for the purity of his motives in criticizing the mendicant orders, compare ‘The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*’ 1104:38–1105:11 and Allen Ep 2037:235–8. Erasmus repeats assertions of this kind many times.

95 His name recalls the Cornelius of Acts 10:2, ‘a devout man and one that feared God with all his house.’ At this point in the colloquy, farce and satire, having done their work, give place to sober narrative and modulated language. The register changes completely as we turn from the clamorous scene at George’s

deathbed to the quiet but confident, even cheerful, discourse in which Cornelius proclaims his faith and makes his farewells while calmly awaiting his end. By witnessing in these few pages how Cornelius meets death we may even learn more about Erasmian piety than from many pages of *De praeparatione ad mortem*, which is ten times as long. That homily contains many good things but lacks the eloquence of Cornelius' simple sincerity and the effectiveness of dialogue.

- 96 This is what Erasmus says of a devout Franciscan, Dietrich Kolde (d 1515) whom he admired (Allen Ep 1347:109–10 / CWE Ep 1347:121–2). It is instructive to compare Ep 1347 with what he wrote of Vitrier in Ep 1211.
- 97 If Erasmus was born in 1467 he was close to sixty when this colloquy was published. The exact year of his birth is not known, and the evidence of his own statements is conflicting. Until 1970 many and probably most scholars favoured 1469 as the birth year, others 1466 or 1465. A.C.F. Koch's *The Year of Erasmus' Birth* (Utrecht 1969) provided new and persuasive reasons for thinking the correct year was 1467; though see J.B. Gleason 'The Birth Dates of John Colet and Erasmus of Rotterdam: Fresh Documentary Evidence' *Renaissance Quarterly* 32 (1979) 73–6.
Sixty was old indeed. Luther, commenting on Ps 90:10 (89:10 Vulg) and the longevity of the patriarchs before the Flood, observes that afterwards the span of life diminished until today, he says, forty or fifty years is the average, adding that the number of those persons who reach sixty is very small (*Sendschreiben an die zu Frankfurt am Main* WA 30 part 3 562:22–5 / LW 13 122). Men die later than women (*De votis monasticis* WA 8 661 / LW 44 388). Erasmus speaks of a woman of 'middle age,' about thirty, as a suitable bride for a man who does not want a young wife (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 665f). For references to what he and some of his contemporaries meant by old age, see 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n4 and a long passage on the age of modern scholars and other writers (Allen Ep 1347:208–309 / CWE Ep 1347:225–332). This is the second half of a letter, c March 1523, to Joost Vroye of Gavere (on whom see Allen Ep 719 introduction and CEBR) first printed with *Exomologesis* in 1524. Vroye is named in 'The Epithalamium' 525:32. The first half of Ep 1347 is devoted in part to the theme of sudden death, the best kind of death for a good man (Allen Ep 1347:69, 139–64, 182–8 / CWE Ep 1347:78–9, 154–81, 198–205).
- 98 'I have never dared or would dare to approach the table of Christ, or depart from this life, without confessing to a priest what weighed upon my conscience,' Erasmus wrote in 1529; see Allen Ep 2136:216–8. For his opinions on confession see 'Youth' 96:31–97:35 and *Exomologesis* LB v 145–70.
- 99 Erasmus thought it a duty to consult physicians but had no illusions about what they could do for him. See *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB v 1312A–B / ASD v-1 378:965–79:978.
- 100 The name has not been explained, but Erasmus might have borrowed it from the Castrutius to whom Jerome wrote his Ep 68, assuring this friend (who was blind) that his physical affliction was not due to any sin. Cornelius' friend Castrutius cannot cure him but tries to cheer him up.
- 101 'And so I sent the doctors away, putting my trust in the Lord' (Allen Ep 1735:9–13) is typical. The doctors he has in mind were practitioners in Basel, 'the ones we have here: worthy of these people, who prefer drinking to doctoring.'

- 102 Such as the cunning sort described in 'Beggar Talk'
- 103 Cornelius' careful attention to aiding the deserving poor, setting his domestic affairs in order, and declining many of the usual trappings of burial are characteristic marks of Erasmian piety.
- 104 Cf *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1304A / ASD V-1 362:529–32.
- 105 All necessary arrangements should be made before it is too late and not left for survivors to determine (*De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1303E–1304A / ASD V-1 360:510–362:532).
- 106 'What is given to monasteries is said to be given to God. True enough, provided it is given with devout motive. But those people are mistaken who suppose that what is given to children, wives, needy relatives is not given to God. On the contrary, those who deprive sons and household, distributing their money to colleges and monasteries, commit a major sin (*peccatum enorme*), a sin denounced by Paul too. And the Lord in the Gospel rebukes those who cheat their parents by giving for corban' (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 1025F). On corban see 'A Fish Diet' n103. The reference to Paul is 1 Tim 5:8. Erasmus comments on this verse in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 940D–E; see also his paraphrase LB VII 1050B–C.
- That Marcolphus asks about the poor may seem surprising, because Cornelius' concern for them has been made plain, but the needy here are probably the mendicant friars.
- 107 *Adagia* I viii 9. Erasmus defends this paragraph in *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1159F–1160A. 'Modest fortune' is *facultatulas*, a diminutive in Jerome Ep 108.10.
- 108 See 776:3 above.
- 109 Extreme unction is the anointing administered when a person's death is thought to be near at hand. Erasmus treats it as he does other sacraments, as something comforting to recipients, its efficacy depending on their disposition. For he who is touched in the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit is blessedly anointed (*De puritate tabernaculi* LB V 310F).
- Confession and the Eucharist before death, however, are much more important. That is why Cornelius attended to these duties on the Sunday preceding his death and why Erasmus affirmed in 1529 that he would not dare to die without confession (n98 above). Yet, confession having been made and communion received, Cornelius does not feel the need of confession again. Erasmus took pains to emphasize both the urgency of confessing all mortal sins and of not treating minor offences as mortal sins. See 'Youth' 97:14–21; and John Payne *Erasmus: His Theology of the Sacraments* (Richmond 1970) 216–19.
- A passage in *De praeparatione ad mortem* repeats approval of the sacrament of confession as providing consolation and strengthening faith. But if for some good reason – sudden death, for example – one cannot avail himself of this or other sacraments, he should not despair. See the quotation on this subject in n130 below. Confession three or four times a year will remove anxiety over confession on one's deathbed (LB V 1305F–1306B / ASD V-1 366:636–49).
- 110 Cornelius' instructions about his funeral can be matched with other records, historical and literary, of the Reformation era. Colet (d 1519) in his will left funeral arrangements to the discretion of his executors and bequeathed nothing for commemorative masses (text of the will in Samuel Knight *Life of Dr John*

- Colet* [London 1724]; see 465 there). Colet was no Lutheran, to be sure, but he took an interest in Lollardy and was once accused of heresy by the bishop of London; see 'A Pilgrimage' n146. Erasmus, in his first will (1527), forbids an expensive, vulgar (*sordido*) or ostentatious burial, but he wants a burial in accordance with ecclesiastical rites, 'so that nobody could complain' (Allen vi 506:119–20 Appendix 19).
- 111 By old custom church bells tolled to announce the death of a parishioner and during the funeral procession to the church.
- 112 See n13 above.
- 113 See n84 above; on merits, nn12, 58 above.
- 114 Both the Paris theologians and Alberto Pio found lines 22–7 erroneous and impious (*Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 953B–C; *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1159D–E). For Erasmus' replies, LB IX 953E–954A, 1159D–1160A.
- 115 *vivum*, but here with additional meaning of 'true,' 'actual,' 'committed.' On membership in the church see 'Faith' 429:4–8; *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1306D / ASD V-1 368:668–74.
- 116 *totam fiduciam*, as in 'Faith' 424:1, 429:6–7. To understand and accept this commitment is the sum of what Erasmus terms his 'Christian philosophy' (Allen Ep 1039:228–37 / CWE Ep 1039:245–54).
- 117 Note 12 above; on briefs 773:30–1 and n80. Entrance to the heavenly Jerusalem 'is not achieved through ceremonies or papal bulls but by a heart cleansed by faith, a good conscience, and deeds of charity which, done for a neighbour, Christ wishes to be imputed to him' (*De puritate tabernaculi* LB V 301B).
- 118 'Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified' (Ps 143:1–2 [142:1–2 Vulg]).
- 119 The Christian soul, like the Socratic, longs for liberation from the body: 'Bring my soul out of prison' (Ps 142:7 [141:8 Vulg]). See *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1295F / ASD V-1 344:89–98 and the colloquy 'The New Mother' 600:6–21. A mark of the true theologian is his teaching that death should be welcomed by the devout (*Paraclesis* LB VI *3 verso / Holborn 143:10–15).
- 120 Isaiah 38; also 2 Kings 20
- 121 John 11:1–45
- 122 'Happy is that man whom death finds meditating on these writings,' the Scriptures (*Paraclesis* LB VI *4 verso / Holborn 148:28–9).
- 123 Common in Erasmus' society. See Allen *Age of Erasmus* 192–5; Ruth Kelso *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana 1956) 121–33. Erasmus' views on the subject are Pauline and conventional. Consult 1 Tim 5:3–16 and 1 Cor 7:8–9; for Erasmus *De vidua christiana* (1529), dedicated to Queen Mary of Hungary (LB V 723D–766E / CWE 66 184–257). See also 'The Old Men's Chat' n32.
- 124 See 'Youth' n76.
- 125 Passages on the divine mercy are recommended in *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1314B–C / ASD V-1 383:80–384:90. Pictures illustrating that mercy (for example, of Christ and the woman of Samaria in John 4:4–26) may also be helpful.

- 126 Ps 22 (21 Vulg)
- 127 Ps 27:1 (26:1 Vulg)
- 128 Last words of Stephen, the first martyr, as he was stoned to death (Acts 7:59).
These words are recommended by Erasmus as most fit for utterance by the dying Christian. See *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB v 1317A / ASD v-1 390:242–3.
- 129 See Ps 4:8 (4:9–10 Vulg) and, on the similitude of sleep and death, Erasmus' commentary on this psalm in LB v 290D–F; see also 'Early to Rise' n12.
- 130 'No one can die badly who has lived well' (Allen Ep 1347:95–6 / CWE Ep 1347:106–7).
On Erasmus' death see 'The Return to Basel' 1122–36.

ECHO

Echo

First printed in the June 1526 edition.

Acoustic conceits such as these echo scenes, in which the final phrase, word, or syllables of a verse are echoed immediately in the reply, were in antiquity and the age of Erasmus a fairly common form of linguistic dexterity. A useful account of them is provided by F.L. Lucas in his note on Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* 5.3.19–51, where the dramatist uses this device effectively (*Complete Works of John Webster* ed F.L. Lucas 4 vols [London 1927] II 195–6). We know Webster was familiar with Erasmus' *Colloquies*; see 'The Funeral' n89. Lucas traces the echo form to fragments of Euripides' lost *Andromeda*, parodied in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* 1056–97; the ancient example best known is Ovid's tale of Narcissus and Echo in *Metamorphoses* 3.358–401. Lucas thinks Erasmus' colloquy 'the most ingenious and amusing' specimen, an opinion not shared by Addison, who treats this form as a variety of 'false wit' and remarks that 'the learned Erasmus, though a man of wit and genius, has composed a dialogue upon this silly kind of device, and made use of an Echo, who seems to have been a very extraordinary linguist' (*Spectator* no 59).

Addison likewise condemns puns, which are evident throughout 'Echo,' as a mode of false wit (*Spectator* no 61). If echoing is involuntary or pathological ('echolalia'), as punning is not, it quickly becomes intolerable. And of course puns as such are not the best or sole test of echo's effectiveness. But if situation, context, and character are treated with artistic power, simple repetition of a word may be enough to move a reader or spectator, as when Iago uses it: 'By heaven, he echoes me' (*Othello* 3.3.110). The use of echo as a literary device has amused or otherwise pleased many readers, if not Addison, and has earned at least a modest footnote in literary history. Technically the echo device was an application of what rhetoricians term *metalepsis* or *transumption* and is similar to *catathesis*, as Erasmus notices in *De copia*. He does not discuss echo directly, but it is related to the other figures just named, as well as to *synecdoche* (on these *De copia* 1.19, 21–4 *CWE* 24 336–41). He refers to the figure of Echo in *Moriae encomium* LB IV 480C–481A / ASD IV-3 170:717–27 / *CWE* 27 137. For other examples of lexical play see his acrostic epigram in *CWE* 85–6 346–7, 706–7 no 124 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 330–2 no 111 and two other colloquies, 'The Imposture' and 'Non-Sequiturs.' Echo can be used in prose or verse. The technical names

given by ancient grammarians or rhetoricians are no barrier to reading these entertainments.

Sir Philip Sidney wrote an unusual echo poem, an eclogue introduced by a few lines explaining how it is to be understood. For the text see *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (the Old Arcadia)* (1590) ed Jean Robertson (Oxford 1973) 159–62, 446. George Herbert's short echo poem *Heaven* (1633) is often reprinted. All but two of Echo's replies there are monosyllables. In Erasmus' text all replies but one consist of two syllables. Seventeen of the answers are in Greek instead of Latin. In the present translation these are at 797:8, 798:2, 14, 16, 41, 799:2, 4, 8, 10, 15, 23, 32, 37, 39, 41, 800:10, 18.

In compositions of this kind Greek and Latin have advantages denied to uninflected languages such as English. A translation of *Echo* can be accurate and intelligible enough to suggest the sort of thing accomplished by the original, but it is an inadequate substitute for Erasmus' clever feat.

Readers of Erasmus' Latin and Greek text are warned not to take the pronunciation of Greek words used there for Echo's punning replies as indicative of what he regarded as correct for all other purposes. His opinions on that subject are explained in *De pronuntiatione* LB I 913–68 / ASD I-4 1–104 / CWE 26 347–475.

On echo poems consult Elbridge Colby *The Echo-Device in Literature* (New York 1920). John Hollander *The Figure of Echo* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1981) deals mainly with the seventeenth century and after. Joseph Loewenstein *Responsive Readings* (New Haven 1984) is concerned with versions of echo in pastoral, epic, and Jonsonian masque. For a provocative analysis of Erasmus' 'Echo,' see J.-C. Margolin 'Culture, rhétorique et satire dans l'*Echo* d'Erasmus' in *Dix conférences sur Erasme* ed Claude Blum (Paris and Geneva 1988) 49–78. This is a model of close reading, intertextuality, and literary history.

YOUTH, ECHO

Youth I'd like a few words with you if there's time.

Echo There's time.

5 **Youth** And if a young chap like me is welcome.

Echo Well, come on.

Youth But can you foretell the future for me, Echo?

Echo Oh, yes.

Youth And you know Greek? What's new?

10 **Echo** News.

Youth Among the arts, which is your favourite study?

Echo Divinity.

Youth So you believe those authors who lead us to good learning should be read?

5 **Echo** Readily.

Youth Then what shall we call persons who traduce these disciplines by their discourse?

Echo Coarse.

Youth But would that devotees of these studies were zealous after virtue as well!

Echo Well would it be!

Youth The villainy of some individuals nowadays has caused whole classes to be disliked.

Echo Likely enough.

15 **Youth** And with many men learning passes for a sin.

Echo Asinine men!

Youth Yet they're not commonly thought to be badly off.

Echo Offal!

Youth What do those do who spend their lives in quibbling only?

20 **Echo** Only spin.

Youth They spin cobwebs,¹ maybe.

Echo May be.

Youth And Penelope's web they weave and reweave.²

Echo Weavers they are.

25 **Youth** What sort of career do you advise me to embark on?

Echo Honest.

Youth Should I marry soon or late?

Echo Late.

Youth What if I have the same luck as those whose wives turn out to be shameless and childless?

Echo Lessons to be learned.

Youth But life with such women would be a fatal mistake.

Echo Take no part in it.

Youth What, is Fortune lord of the soul?

35 **Echo** Sole lord.

Youth It might be better to prefer a monastic life to wedlock.

Echo Lock yourself in?

Youth What remedy is left when one can't extricate oneself?

Echo Self-pity.

40 **Youth** But it's wretched for men to live alone.

Echo Lonely they are.

Youth What's your opinion of most modern monks?

Echo Monkeys!

Youth Then what causes some people to think them so wonderful?

Echo Foolish fear.

5 **Youth** What is it that makes an ecclesiastical career so welcome?

Echo Comfort.

Youth A priest has nothing to boot?

Echo Booty.

Youth How do bishops and the good life agree?

10 **Echo** Grievously.

Youth But no men live more at ease.

Echo Easily proved!

Youth What can bring them to understand how great a duty they must fulfil?

15 **Echo** Philosophy.³

Youth Then the priesthood is a fine thing if one carries out its responsibilities as one should?

Echo Should be.

Youth If I try my luck at kings' courts, shall I prosper?

20 **Echo** Perdition!⁴

Youth But I see not a few who constantly prophesy that their chances of fortune there are wonderful.⁵

Echo Fools!⁶

25 **Youth** Yet when they go about dressed in silks they seem men of high worth.

Echo Worthless!

Youth You say, then, that (if one looks closely) men are gold without and worthless as figs within?⁷

Echo In fact less than that.

30 **Youth** Then those clad in fine linen, whom we reverence as gods, aren't worth much after all?

Echo Almost nothing.

Youth And of soldiers you'll perhaps think even less?

Echo Less than nothing.

35 **Youth** Astrologers, who tell fortunes from the stars, promise much by their craft.⁸

Echo Crafty!

Youth But grammarians⁹ live laborious days.

Echo Dazed, yes.

40 **Youth** I suppose you've little use for hungry, pettifogging lawyers.¹⁰

Echo Lawyers are jackals.

Youth What shall I be like if I turn workman?

Echo Mannerless.

Youth Then from the arts, good or bad, will nothing else remain?

Echo Maintenance.

5 **Youth** Shall I be happy if I persevere in study?

Echo Decidedly.

Youth But what will make me dutiful?

Echo Fullness of time.

Youth I've already ground away ten years at Cicero.

10 **Echo** O you ass!¹¹

Youth What makes you call me such?

Echo Such you are.

Youth Perhaps you mean I shouldn't pore over Cicero so much that I neglect all the rest.

15 **Echo** Rest assured I do.

Youth Then you don't approve of a man's tormenting himself all his life long for the sole purpose of becoming a Ciceronian?

Echo An idiot!

Youth What's left for men too old for such work?

20 **Echo** Working the soil.

Youth If I were farther away, you'd be more eloquent, no doubt.

Echo No doubt.

Youth Speech in two syllables I dislike.

Echo Like it or leave it.

25 **Youth** I was the first to begin; nothing will stop you from having the last word, I see.

Echo See that I have it.

Youth So now you think I'm sufficiently instructed to manage life's problems well?

30 **Echo** Well indeed.

Youth Then tell me if you want me to go.

Echo Go!

NOTES

1 Waste time in frivolous or fruitless activities; *Adagia* i iv 47. Another proverbial phrase suggested by this line is equally applicable to quibblers, who in this context are sophists and academic dialecticians: *de lana caprina* 'about goat's wool,' alluding to tiresome arguments over trivialities (*Adagia* i iii 53, from Horace *Epistles* 1.18.15).

2 An enterprise secretly managed in such a way that it will never come to an end. Penelope, the chaste wife of Ulysses, promised to make a decision

- about marrying one of her importunate suitors when she finished weaving a winding-sheet for Laertes, her father-in-law. She deceived the suitors by unravelling at night what she had woven by day (*Adagia* I iv 42, from *Odyssey* 2.85–110).
- 3 Johann Maier of Eck, usually called Eck, an opponent of Erasmus as well as of Luther, suspected that theological errors lurked in the Greek terms used in 'Echo' (Allen Ep 2392:34–41). Particulars of his objections are not known.
 - 4 Literally 'Ate,' goddess of discord and strife, therefore a synonym for 'strife.' See 'A Fish Diet' n79. On the hard life of courtiers see *Moriae encomium* LB IV 480C–481B / ASD IV-3 170:717–38 / CWE 27 136–7.
 - 5 Soothsayers (*qui solent . . . ariolari*); *Adagia* III v 25
 - 6 Λάροι, persons trapped by their own greed. See *Adagia* II ii 33.
 - 7 *ficulnos*; like fig trees, weak and useless. Cf Horace *Satires* 1.8.1 and *Adagia* I vii 85.
 - 8 For Erasmus' opinions of them see 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n14.
 - 9 Wonderfully described in *Moriae encomium* LB IV 457A–458B / ASD IV-3 138:238–140:418 / CWE 27 122–3.
 - 10 *legulei homines*. *Moriae encomium* LB IV 435A / ASD IV-3 42:749 / CWE 27 107, and see Cicero *De oratore* 1.55.236; Quintilian 12.3.11.
 - 11 These two lines are quoted by Bacon in his *Advancement of Learning* 1.4.2 (*Works* ed James Spedding, R.L. Ellis, and D.D. Heath, 7 vols [London 1857–9] VI 119–20). The gibes in the lines that follow at pedantic imitators of Ciceronian style foreshadow a quarrel that agitated the world of learning for many years and had serious consequences in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literary criticism. Erasmus made a characteristic and important contribution to this controversy by his satirical *Ciceronianus* (1528) LB I 973A–1016C / ASD I-2 583–710. See also the introduction to 'Penny-Pinching' 979–82. For a translation of *Ciceronianus* see CWE 28.

A FEAST OF MANY COURSES

Πολυδαιτία, *Dispar convivium*

First printed in the 1527 edition. Apparently *Dispar convivium* 'unequal feast' was added to suggest that variety of guests and dishes, if carefully chosen, is essential to a good feast. This alternative title was omitted in some later editions.

The specific recommendations of Apicius for managing a dinner party, and the general soundness of his advice, are confirmed by scenes in other colloquies and in many anecdotes or observations scattered throughout the pages of Erasmus' various writings. In 'A Lesson in Manners,' 'The Profane Feast,' 'The Godly Feast,' and 'The Poetic Feast,' we hear or see what makes a dinner enjoyable; in 'Inns' and 'Penny-Pinching' entertainment of a different quality is described. Here and there in Erasmus' letters too we get a glimpse of his preferences in food and drink and his ways of dealing with bores and boors, of welcoming amenities and avoiding discomforts. He grumbled about large dinners and tiresome after-dinner conversation but, despite incessant work and delicate health, enjoyed temperate conviviality with old friends, and did not, when God sent a cheerful hour, refrain.

Since prevalent notions of food and drink and entertainment – if such matters are taken seriously – furnish clues to standards of taste and decorum in a society, we can learn something about sixteenth-century life and manners even from such brief dialogues as this one. In the main, Apicius' admonitions convey familiar wisdom, dictated by custom and common sense and still useful. The sixteenth century, like our own, had plenty of books on manners and domestic economy for those who wanted them. And in this as in so many other aspects of civilized life, educated men were aware, or were expected to be aware, not merely of local or regional customs but of precepts bearing the stamp of classical authority. It is no surprise then that injunctions in these and other pages of Erasmus resemble those in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*, Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*, and the *Quaestiones convivales* in Plutarch's *Moralia*. The standard sixteenth-century repository of lore about ancient dining is J.G. Stuck's *Antiquitatum convivialium libri tres* (Zürich 1582), in which evidence from 650 writers is collected.

SPUDUS, APICIUS¹

Spudus Ho there, Apicius! Ho!

Apicius I don't hear you.

Spudus Ho there, Apicius, I say!

Apicius Who's this troublesome interrupter?

Spudus I want you – something important.

Apicius But I'm in a hurry to something important.

5 **Spudus** What?

Apicius Dinner.

Spudus The very subject I wanted to take up with you.

Apicius Too busy now to bother with lawyers, lest I lose time.²

Spudus You won't lose anything. I'll walk along with you to wherever
10 you're hurrying.

Apicius Well, tell me, but make it brief.

Spudus I'm hard at work planning a dinner party at which I want to please all the guests and displease none. Since you're a master of this art, I appeal to you as to an oracle.

15 **Apicius** Hear my answer – and in accordance with ancient custom it's in verse:

If you daren't displease one,
Then it's best to have none.

20

Spudus But this is a particularly important dinner; I must have many guests.

Apicius The more you invite, the more you must displease.³ What play was ever so well written or acted that it pleased the entire audience?

25 **Spudus** But come on, Apicius, you favourite of Comus,⁴ help me with your advice; I'll look upon you hereafter as godlike.

Apicius Then the first piece of advice is this: don't attempt the impossible.

Spudus What's that?

Apicius To be a host who pleases everyone. There's such a variety of tastes.

30 **Spudus** But I want to displease as few as possible at any rate.

Apicius Invite few.

Spudus I can't do that.

Apicius Then invite equals who have similar tastes.

35 **Spudus** I'm not free even to do that. I can't avoid inviting a large number, people of different sorts, and in fact those who don't even speak the same language or come from the same country.

Apicius Well, what you describe is really not a collation but a commotion, where you're likely to have the kind of farce the Hebrews say occurred in the building of Babel: when someone asks for a cold dish, somebody else
40 hands him a hot one.

Spudus Come to my rescue, I beg you. You'll find me grateful, and I won't forget it.

Apicius All right, since you've no choice I'll give you some good advice in this difficulty. The gaiety of a dinner party depends to no small degree on where each person sits.⁵

Spudus Very true.

- 5 **Apicius** To solve this problem, let the seating be decided by lot.

Spudus Good advice.

Apicius Next, don't let the dishes move so slowly from the head to the foot of the table that they resemble the letter S or a snake, or go back and forth as the myrtle crown used to be exchanged at ancient feasts.⁶

- 10 **Spudus** What should be done, then?

Apicius Set a group of three dishes in front of each quartet of guests, with a fourth dish in the middle, as boys lay a fourth nut on top of three others.⁷ Have different foods in each dish, so that each person may choose what he likes.

Spudus Very good. But how often shall I change dishes?

- 15 **Apicius** How many parts has a formal speech?

Spudus Five, if I'm not mistaken.⁸

Apicius How many acts to a play?

Spudus I've read in Horace that it should be no longer than five acts.⁹

Apicius Change dishes that often, so that you have something with a sauce

- 20 for prologue and a conclusion or epilogue of various desserts.¹⁰

Spudus What order of dishes do you recommend?

Apicius The same order Pyrrhus used in battle.¹¹

Spudus What do you mean?

Apicius As in a speech, so at a dinner, the prologue should not be elaborate.

- 25 Furthermore the epilogue should be approved for its variety rather than lavishness. Accordingly, Pyrrhus' system is to be followed in the three courses: by having something choice at each end and the more commonplace fare in the centre. By this means you won't seem stingy and won't embarrass your guests with a disgusting abundance.

- 30 **Spudus** Good enough, so far as food is concerned. You've still to instruct me about the drinking.¹²

Apicius Don't *you* serve a cup to a single one but leave that to the servants, so that when they're asked for wine they'll learn what kind each guest prefers and when he beckons will serve him promptly what he likes. This

- 35 method has a double advantage: the drinking is more moderate as well as more pleasant, not only because one is freshly supplied at frequent intervals but also because nobody drinks unless thirsty.

Spudus Excellent advice. But how is it to be arranged that they all have a good time?

- 40 **Apicius** That depends partly on you.

Spudus How so, pray?

Apicius You remember the tag about 'A cheerful countenance is the best welcome.'¹³

Spudus What's the point?

Apicius That you should receive your guests cordially and greet them with a smile, suiting your speech to each one's age, humour, and habits.

Spudus I'll come closer, in order that you may tell me better.

Apicius You know their language?

Spudus Nearly all.

Apicius To talk to every one in his own tongue from time to time and make the dinner merry with entertaining stories, introduce a variety of subjects everyone likes to recall and no one hears with displeasure.¹⁴

Spudus What kinds of subjects?

Apicius There are peculiarities of temperament you'll observe better yourself. I'll generalize on some. Old men are fond of recalling what most people have forgotten. They praise the good old days when they were in their prime. To wives it's sweet to revive memories of the time when they had suitors. Sailors, who have visited strange and distant parts of the world, talk readily about things which, because nobody has seen them, everybody marvels at. Also, as the proverb says, recollection of dangers past is pleasant if they're such as are not joined with vice – if for example they're about war, travel, and shipwreck.¹⁵ Last of all, everybody enjoys conversation about his own specialty and about what he's expert at.

These are generalities. I can't describe idiosyncrasies one by one but – for example – one man is especially eager for praise, another wishes to be thought learned, another is happy if thought rich. This man is somewhat garrulous, that laconic; some you'll find irritable, others genial. There are some who hate to appear old even though they are old, and others who want to be regarded as older than they are, posing in order to be admired for carrying their years so well. There are women who are vain of their figures, others who are affected. When these dispositions are recognized, it's not hard to carry on conversations acceptable to anyone and to avoid topics that spread gloom.

Spudus Truly you're expert in the art of being a host.

Apicius Pooh! If I had spent as much time and labour on either branch of the law, on medicine and theology, as I have on this art, I'd have won LL.D., M.D., and D.D. degrees and been at the head of my profession long ago.

Spudus I believe it.

Apicius But look here: to avoid mistakes, take care that the talk isn't spun out too long or doesn't lead to drunkenness. As nothing is more enjoyable than wine if taken in moderation, on the other hand nothing is more troublesome if you drink too much. It's the same with talk.

Spudus You're right, but what remedy can you offer for this inconvenience?

Apicius When you notice that non-alcoholic intoxication¹⁶ begins to appear, take the opportunity to interrupt the talk and introduce a different topic. No

- 5 need, I suppose, to remind you not to let an old wound be reopened at a dinner party, despite Plato's opinion that feasts are the occasion for curing certain faults, that wine banishes sorrow and wipes out the remembrance of a wrong.¹⁷ But you should be warned not to greet your guests too often, though I do approve of your walking around from time to time and speaking
10 cordially now to these, now to those; a good host should play an active role. But nothing is more boorish than to call attention to what kind of food you have, how it's cooked, how much it cost.¹⁸ The same goes for the wine. In fact you ought to apologize modestly for what is served. However, overemphatic disparagement of the fare is a form of boasting. Enough to say two or at most
15 three times, 'I hope you will be kind! If the fare's not grand, at least your welcome's very grand.' Season the talk with jokes now and then, but avoid ones that might offend. And it will help if you say a few words to a person in his own tongue from time to time. – I should have said at the start what has just come into my mind.

- 20 **Spudus** What?

Apicius If you don't like to choose places by lot, take the trouble to choose from all those present three persons who are naturally good-humoured and talkative. Put one at the head of the table, another at the foot, the third in the middle, to dispel the silence and moroseness of others. But if you notice that
25 the banquet's too glum with silence or unruly with shouting or likely to end in quarrels –

Spudus This often happens to me. What should I do then?

Apicius Try a remedy I've found very helpful.

Spudus I'm waiting to hear it.

- 30 **Apicius** Bring in a pair of mimes or buffoons to put on some comic pantomime.

Spudus Why no dialogue?

Apicius To afford everyone equal pleasure, they should say nothing or else speak in a tongue equally unknown to all. The language of gesture will be
35 intelligible to all alike.

Spudus I'm not clear about the kind of act you mean.

Apicius There are countless ones: for example a woman arguing with her husband over who's boss, or something similar from everyday life. The more ridiculous the posturing, the more fun it will be for everyone. The mimes
40 should be only partial fools; otherwise those who are complete simpletons sometimes blurt out things that hurt people's feelings.¹⁹

Spudus I beg you always to be as kind a Comus as you've been in giving me this good advice.

Apicius I'll add a conclusion or rather repeat what I said at the beginning: in this as in all of life, don't try too hard to please everybody. Then you may

5 sooner please them all. The best rule of life is: 'Nothing to excess.'²⁰

NOTES

- 1 The name Apicius, the Roman expert on cookery, is still synonymous with 'gourmet.' See 'The Profane Feast' n5. Spudus ('earnest,' 'serious') is also the name of a speaker in 'The Epicurean' (it is there spelled 'Spudaeus').
- 2 The Latin here plays with several meanings of *actus* and *ago*. When Apicius speaks of losing time (*ne actum agam*) he uses legal jargon signifying that he cannot reopen a case already decided. See *Adagia* I iv 70.
- 3 The proper number of guests was three to nine, but exceptions to the rule were common. See 'The Profane Feast' n102. Avoid having too many guests (Plutarch *Moralia* 615D *Quaestiones convivales* 1.2). Sometimes unexpected and uninvited guests, 'shadows,' were brought along by invited ones; see 'Additional formulae' n24.
- 4 God of revels, as in *Moriae encomium* LB IV 411A / ASD IV-3 78:133 / CWE 27 89
- 5 On this question see Plutarch *Moralia* 615C–619A *Quaestiones convivales* 1.2.
- 6 The host must see to it that food and wine are placed and served properly. If some guests cannot sing a song when the lute is passed around, they must do something else instead, the best they can under the circumstances; they must, as a proverb says, 'sing to the myrtle' or laurel garland if not to the lute. For *canere ad myrtum* see *Adagia* II vi 21 and Plutarch *Moralia* 615B; *Quaestiones convivales* cf Allen Ep 363:1.
- 7 See 'Hunting' n6.
- 8 As the art and practice of classical rhetoric has five main parts governing eloquence in discourse (*inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, actio*), so a speech or formal argument has five or six ways of dividing and arranging relevant material (*exordium, narratio, divisio, confirmatio* and *refutatio, peroratio*). Of theory and practice Quintilian and Cicero were, for Erasmus, the great masters.
- 9 *Ars poetica* 189–90
- 10 The number of courses and the variety of desserts vary in the *convivia* in the *Colloquies*. In all of them, conversation is more important than food; cf 'Additional formulae' 128:27–129:7 and 'The Profane Feast' 146:26–7. Linguistic variation no doubt influenced the menu at 'The Profane Feast'; guests are served a variety of roasts as a main course (capon, beef, mutton, venison, hare, rabbits, goose, partridges, pigeons – and pork is mentioned), *paté de fois gras*, and fruit and chestnuts for dessert (135:22–3, 139:35–143:15, 147:35–41). 'The Godly Feast' comes closest to the five-part menu recommended here: after an 'ovation' of eggs and greens, which is followed by a boiled capon (183:27, 186:11–14, 186:41–187:3), the host says that a roast, dessert, and 'the catastrophe' will follow (187:3–4); there are in fact several roasts (189:13–14). Dessert is probably fruit (198:3–5, 202:32–3), and the 'catastrophe' is not described. 'The

Poetic Feast' opens with melons, banter about beet greens substituted for lettuce, and figs (391:12–27, 393:4–7); next there are eggs, sliced cucumber with a sauce, a hen from the coop, and fruit for dessert (396:35–6, 397:7, 398:23–6, 404:25–6). Guests at 'The Fabulous Feast' and 'The Sober Feast' dine on stories; no food is mentioned at the first, and nothing is offered at the second but lettuce (without salt, vinegar, and oil) and water from the well (926:8–9).

- 11 Explained in Apicius' next comment. Pyrrhus, king of Epirus (d 272BC), was a masterly tactician and was remembered for defining a 'Pyrrhic victory' as one so costly as to be very nearly ruinous. Cf *Apophthegmata* LB IV 241A–B. Plutarch's *Lives* has an account of Pyrrhus.
- 12 If there is plenty of wine, give each guest as much as he wants; if not, give an equal portion to everyone (Plutarch *Moralia* 208B–C *Apophthegmata Laconica*). Cf 'The Fabulous Feast' 575:4–23.
- 13 Ovid *Metamorphoses* 8.677–8
- 14 Gellius 13.11.3–5, derived from Varro, gives what Erasmus considered the correct doctrine about table talk: that it must be interesting, agreeable, and shared by all.
- 15 *Adagia* II iii 43; cf 'The Shipwreck' n2.
- 16 Greek in the original, from Plutarch *Moralia* 716A *Quaestiones convivales*; used by Erasmus in *Adagia* I iii 3
- 17 The passage Erasmus seems to have in mind is *Laws* 671C–673D, where it is argued that if properly regulated – and not otherwise – conviviality will foster friendship and not breed quarrels; and therefore men will be the better for using wine. So Ecclus (Sirach) 31:30–2.
- 18 For an example see Horace *Satires* 2.8.
- 19 Erasmus sometimes found the noise and chatter of entertainers intolerable. See the protest in 'Inns' 374:33–41.
- 20 *Adagia* I vi 96; often found in Erasmus

THINGS AND NAMES

De rebus ac vocabulis

First printed in the 1527 edition.

'Things and names' is a deceptively simple phrase. A reader encounters a slight variant of it (*res et verba*) in the opening lines of *De ratione studii*, where he is informed that things and words – objects of thought or experience and language – comprise the whole of knowledge (CWE 24 666). Upon examination, however, the phrase soon begins to seem not simple but complex; and in fact it was a technical phrase with which learned men found many difficulties. Consideration of it led them to the mysteries of universals, of the reality of genera and species – topics pondered by philosophers since Plato, and since Abelard requiring discussion by logicians and metaphysicians in universities.

Erasmus, more moralist than metaphysician, employs 'things and names' to fix attention on whether ethical terms and their contraries (truth and lie, honesty and dishonesty, and so on) when used in daily life as criteria of behaviour have inherent, intrinsic meanings. Is there an *essential* bond between word and thing, or are the ordinary and usual connections merely conventions of linguistic and social custom? The answer makes a difference, for personal and public relationships depend in large measure on agreement over words.

This brief colloquy enforces some contrasts between appearance and reality, shadow and substance. As usual in these dialogues, Erasmus makes his points informally and agreeably, with illustrations from familiar situations – the only sensible method of presenting philosophy to young readers, as he says elsewhere ('The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1097:10–1098:16). Some of the examples of trickery related here are surely taken from Erasmus' own experiences with double-dealers, especially with Franz Birckmann, whom he had attacked earlier in 'The Liar and the Man of Honour.' The sardonic passage on a false knight in the final lines of 'Things and Names' furnished material for a colloquy of 1529 which is aimed at another of the author's enemies, Heinrich Eppendorf, 'The Knight without a Horse.' It is more than coincidence that the men who tried, without much success, to arbitrate the quarrel between Erasmus and Eppendorf were Beatus Rhenanus and Bonifacius Amerbach, whose names are borne by the speakers in this colloquy.

Certain of the larger issues of Erasmus' subject are illuminated by J.-C. Margolin 'Erasmus et la vérité' in his *Recherches érasmiennes* (Geneva 1969) 45–69 and by J. Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* 86–90, 923–30, 1107–28.

A Spanish translation appeared in 1528 and was reprinted in a collection in 1530 (Bataillon *Érasme et l'Espagne* xxix nos 262, 268); an Italian one by Pietro Lauro in 1545 and 1549 (see BE 2nd series *Colloquia* III 271); and an English one at Canterbury c 1550 by Edmund Becke, who published with it his translation of *Cyclops* (Devereux 4.2.1; reprinted by De Vocht *Earliest English Translations* 31–51 and by Spurgeon 223–44).

BEATUS, BONIFACE¹

Beatus Greetings to Boniface.

Boniface Greetings and more greetings to Beatus. But I wish we were each
5 what we're called – you rich and I handsome.²

Beatus So you think it's unimportant to have a splendid name?

Boniface Very unimportant indeed unless the substance be added.

Beatus But many mortals feel otherwise.

Boniface They may be mortals, but I don't think they're men.

10 **Beatus** Yes, they're men, my good friend – unless you suppose camels and asses even now walk about in human form.

Boniface I'd sooner believe this than that those who value the name more than the actual thing are men.

Beatus In certain respects most men prefer things to names, I grant; in many
15 they don't.

Boniface I don't quite follow.

Beatus But we ourselves furnish examples. You're called Boniface, and you have what you're called; but if you were to be deprived of one or the other,
20 would you prefer to have an ugly face or be named Cornelius instead of Boniface?

Boniface Certainly I'd rather be called Thersites³ than have an awful face. Whether I've a handsome one, I don't know.

Beatus Likewise if I were rich and had to give up either the thing or the name, I'd rather be called Irus⁴ than lose my wealth.

25 **Boniface** You're right; I agree.

Beatus It will turn out the same, I think, with those who have good health or are endowed with other physical advantages.

Boniface Probably.

Beatus But how many we see who prefer the reputation of a learned and
30 godly man to being learned and godly!

Boniface I know a great many of that sort.

Beatus In our society, isn't reputation more important than reality?

Boniface So it seems.

Beatus Now if we had a logician at hand, to give us a clear definition of a king, a bishop, a magistrate, and a philosopher, perhaps we should find here too men who prefer reputation to reality.

Boniface So we should, if a king is one who by law and justice looks out
5 for the welfare of his people, not of himself;⁵ if a bishop is one who devotes himself entirely to watching over his master's flock;⁶ if a magistrate is one who wholeheartedly serves the public good;⁷ and if a philosopher is one who, disregarding fortune's gifts, strives only to attain a good conscience.⁸

Beatus You see here how many examples of this kind I could gather.

10 **Boniface** Very many, clearly.

Beatus Will you deny all these are men?

Boniface I fear we ourselves would sooner lose the name of man.

Beatus But if man is a rational animal, how extremely unreasonable it is that
15 in physical advantages (a more accurate name than 'goods') and in external things granted and snatched away by the whim of fortune, we should prefer the substance to the name; in the true goods of the mind, should make more of the name than of the reality.⁹

Boniface A ridiculous choice, by Hercules, if you consider it.

Beatus But the same reasoning applies to the opposite circumstances.

20 **Boniface** Go on; I'm listening.

Beatus We ought to judge the names of things to be avoided in the same way we judged names of things to be sought.

Boniface Apparently.

Beatus For a man ought to shrink more from being a tyrant than from the
25 name of tyrant; and if a wicked bishop is, as the Gospel teaches, a thief and a robber,¹⁰ we ought to hate not so much these names as the fact itself.

Boniface I'm with you.

Beatus Consider other cases in the same fashion.

Boniface I understand exactly.

30 **Beatus** Don't all men loathe the name of fool?

Boniface Absolutely.

Beatus Wouldn't one be a fool if he fished with a golden hook,¹¹ preferred glass to jewels, loved horses more than wife and children?

Boniface He'd be sillier than a Coroebus.¹²

35 **Beatus** Aren't men fools who rush off and enlist in the army in the hope of booty – not very much booty at that – at risk to body and soul?¹³ Who toil to amass wealth when they have a soul in need of every good? Who wear fancy clothes and live in fine houses when their souls lie sloven and neglected? Who watch their physical health anxiously and ignore a spirit suffering from
40 so many fatal maladies? Who, finally, with the fleeting pleasures of this life earn everlasting torments?

Boniface Reason itself compels us to confess they're more than fools.

Beatus And though you see these fools everywhere, you'd find scarcely any who would put up with the *name* of fool, yet they don't object so much to *being* fools.

5 **Boniface** That's true.

Beatus Come now: you know how everyone resents the names of liar and thief.

Boniface Most hateful words, and rightly so.

Beatus Granted. But though seducing another man's wife is worse than theft, still some men even take pride in the name of adulterer.¹⁴ Call them thief and out come their swords in an instant.

Boniface There are many of that kind.

Beatus So, though many debauch themselves with whores and drink, freely and publicly, they resent the name of rake.

15 **Boniface** Yes, they boast of the thing but are horrified if it's called by its right name.

Beatus But hardly any name is more intolerable to our ears than that of liar.

Boniface I know of men who have avenged this taunt with bloodshed.

Beatus But would they were equally horrified by the thing itself! Have you never had the experience of finding that someone who had promised to repay a loan by a certain day failed to keep his bargain?

20 **Boniface** Often, even when he'd sworn he'd pay – not once but over and over.

Beatus Unable to pay, perhaps.

25 **Boniface** Oh, they were able, all right, but they thought it more to their advantage not to repay the debt.

Beatus Isn't that lying?¹⁵

Boniface Quite obviously.

Beatus Would you dare reproach a 'creditor'¹⁶ of that sort with 'Why do you lie to me so often?'

30 **Boniface** Not unless I were ready for a fight.

Beatus Don't stonecutters, carpenters, goldsmiths, and clothiers make daily commitments of the same sort, promising something by a certain day but not keeping their word even if the matter's important to you?

35 **Boniface** They have an astonishing cheek. Add to these the lawyers with their promises of getting something done.

Beatus You can add six hundred¹⁷ names, yet none of these persons will stand for 'liar.'

Boniface The world abounds with liars of this kind.

40 **Beatus** Likewise no one tolerates the name of thief, though they don't all shrink equally from theft.

Boniface I'm waiting for you to say it more clearly.

Beatus What's the difference between one who steals your money from a desk and one who denies something deposited with him?

5 **Boniface** None, except that one who robs the person who trusted him is the more villainous.

Beatus But how few are there who restore what's entrusted to them. Or if they do, they don't restore it intact.

Boniface Very few, I dare say.

10 **Beatus** Yet no one would endure the word 'thief,' though they don't mind the deed.

Boniface True enough.

Beatus Now consider what usually happens in administering the property of minors and in wills and legacies: how much sticks to the fingers of the executors?

15 **Boniface** Often the whole of it.

Beatus They love theft; the word they detest.

Boniface Of course.

20 **Beatus** The conduct of those who handle public funds, who debase the coinage, who now by inflating the value of money, now by deflating it, cause private citizens to lose their property, we are perhaps not free to discuss; of what we experience every day we may speak. A man who borrows money or goes into debt with no intention of ever repaying if he can help it – how little does he differ from a thief!

Boniface He's more careful, you might say, but he's no better.

25 **Beatus** Yet numerous as these are everywhere, still not one of them tolerates the name of thief.¹⁸

Boniface Their conscience is known only to God. Hence they're commonly said by men to be 'overdrawn,' not thieves.

30 **Beatus** It makes very little difference what they're called by men if they're thieves in God's sight. Surely each one knows his own conscience. And what about the man who, even though in debt, shamelessly squanders whatever money comes his way; who after going bankrupt in one city fools his creditors and flees to another, looking for strangers he can cheat – and does this repeatedly? Doesn't he proclaim clearly enough what sort of conscience
35 he has?

Boniface Enough and to spare. Nevertheless they're used to covering up their doings with a smokescreen.

Beatus How?

40 **Boniface** Owing a lot of money to people puts them in the same class, they say, as leading citizens and even kings.¹⁹ Therefore men endowed with this talent commonly try to pass themselves off as nobility.

Beatus For what purpose?

Boniface It's wonderful how much people will let a knight get away with.²⁰

Beatus By what right? What laws?

Boniface The same as those by which governors of maritime districts claim
5 for themselves whatever is cast up by a shipwreck, even if the owner survives; by which others want to keep as their own whatever they seize from a thief or a pirate.

Beatus Thieves themselves could make laws of that sort!

Boniface Would, too, if they could enforce them. And they'd have an excuse
10 if they declared war before thieving.

Beatus Who granted this right to a cavalier rather than an infantryman?

Boniface Favour of the military. How to plunder the enemy is included in their training for war.²¹

Beatus That's how Pyrrhus trained his soldiers for war, I believe.

15 **Boniface** No, it was the Lacedaemonians.²²

Beatus Damn their training. But where does the title of so great a privilege come from?

Boniface Some inherit it from ancestors; others buy it; some simply appropriate it.

20 **Beatus** May anybody appropriate it?

Boniface If his behaviour corresponds.

Beatus What sort of behaviour is that?

Boniface If he never does a good deed, if he dresses like a dandy, wears rings on his fingers, whores bravely, dices constantly, plays cards,²³ spends
25 his life in drinking and having a good time, never speaks of anything commonplace but chatters solely of forts, battles, and wars, plays Thraso²⁴ in everything. These fellows assume the right to declare war on anyone they please, even if they don't own enough land to stand on.

Beatus Knights fit for a hobbyhorse, you mean. But Gelderland²⁵ has more
30 than a few such knights.

NOTES

- 1 The names of two of Erasmus' closest friends, Beatus Rhenanus and Bonifacius Amerbach. Beatus Rhenanus (1485–1547) was associated with Erasmus from 1514, when Erasmus moved to Basel, by their common interests as scholars and by Beatus' work as an editor and corrector for Johann Froben, Erasmus' publisher. Beatus is connected too with the *Colloquia*, for he wrote the preface to the first (unauthorized) edition, issued in November 1518. Later he performed many other services for Erasmus, finally writing the earliest printed memoirs of him; see Allen I 52–71. After 1526 he lived mainly in Sélestat but kept in

touch with the Froben press and with Erasmus. He was an important and prolific scholar.

Bonifacius Amerbach (1496–1562) was the youngest son of Johann Amerbach, Basel printer and publisher in the generation just preceding the arrival of Erasmus. Bonifacius, lawyer as well as scholar, was Erasmus' legal adviser and the principal executor of his will. He was deeply involved in religious, civic, and academic affairs in Basel. *Erasmi epistolae* contains more correspondence with him than with anyone else. His own family's correspondence, *Die Amerbachkorrespondenz* ed A. Hartmann and B.R. Jenny (Basel 1942–), is, like *Erasmi epistolae*, a treasury for students of the period, and the excellence of the editing matches that of Allen. On Bonifacius Amerbach see the essay in Myron Gilmore *Humanists and Jurists: Six Studies in the Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass 1963) 146–77.

- 2 *Beatus* means 'blessed,' 'fortunate,' 'prosperous.' Bonifacius means 'handsome,' 'of a fair countenance.'
- 3 See *Adagia* iv iii 80 and 'Courtship' n37.
- 4 A surly beggar to whom the disguised Ulysses gave a beating after his return to Ithaca. See *Odyssey* 18:1–111. The name was proverbial for a beggar; *Adagia* i vi 76. A speaker in 'Beggar Talk' is named Irides 'son of Irus.'
- 5 A good king obeys the laws of his own free will. He is to the state what soul is to body ('The Fabulous Feast' 579:4–5 and n40). He is not above the law, and he must be careful 'not to be taken in by the false application of fine words . . . the source from which practically all the world's evils arise' (*Institutio principis christiani* 3 LB IV 592D / ASD IV-1 188:691–2 / Born 212 / CWE 27 258–9). 'The Godly Feast' 184:4–186:35 is pertinent to this theme, as are 'Charon' and *Querela pacis*.
- 6 The emphatic word here is 'entirely.' On many occasions Erasmus took the episcopate to task for neglect of their primary duty, inherited from the primitive church, of instructing Christian people by preaching and teaching. Since they are in the very centre of spiritual authority, this negligence is the more lamentable. Too many bishops are now busy administrators. They are too worldly, too wealthy, too close to courts and kings, and therefore too often absent from their sees to be effective spiritual leaders. St John Chrysostom thought most bishops would not be saved (*In Acta apostolorum homiliae* 3 PG 60 39 / NPNF 1st series XI 23). This question appears from time to time in later centuries. Salimbene, the Franciscan chronicler (d 1288), tells of a prior of Clairvaux who was chosen bishop of Tournai but despite all efforts of the pope and of St Bernard refused the office. After his death he revealed to a monk in a vision that the Holy Trinity informed him that had he become a bishop he would have been among the damned (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* xxxii 142–3; translation in G.G. Coulton *From St Francis to Dante* [rev ed London 1907; repr Philadelphia 1972] 95). Without troubling himself about such questions, Erasmus thought it a scandal, as other reformers did, for bishops to dodge their duty of preaching. See *Ecclesiastes* LB v 801C–818D and for other relevant texts 'A Fish Diet' nn169, 254, 255.
- 7 He must be mature (between fifty and seventy, Plato says in *Laws* 6.755), strict, impartial, and incorruptible. For a summary of his qualities and functions see *Institutio principis christiani* 7 (LB IV 601C–602F / ASD IV-1 204–6 / Born 235–7 / CWE 27 273–5).

- 8 By this short description a philosopher would seem to be a moderate Academic or Stoic, but what Erasmus more likely intends is a thoughtful Christian gentleman, sufficiently educated but not pedantic; a dutiful, pious, exemplary citizen. We meet his like in 'The Godly Feast.' On Erasmus' objections to the abstractness and terminology of formal philosophy, the kind prevalent in the universities, see 'The Godly Feast' n190. He was acquainted with that philosophy, to be sure, but unsympathetic and impatient with it. Moral wisdom, not metaphysics, came first with him. See Allen Ep 2533:109–15.
- 9 On the calculus of goods see 'The Epicurean.'
- 10 John 10:1
- 11 Foolish, because doing so risked something precious for the sake of a minor gain; *Adagia* II ii 60. But 'to fish with a golden hook' in Rome had another meaning: that it is foolish to go there seeking for a benefice unless one is well supplied with money. See 'In Pursuit of Benefices' 47:29–31 and n13.
- 12 Who tried to number the waves of the sea although he could count only to five; *Adagia* II ix 64
- 13 So 'Military Affairs'; 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 333:18–24
- 14 In *Adagia* IV vi 25 Erasmus contrasts the severity of punishments for adultery in ancient societies with the comparative but disgraceful tolerance of this sin by Christians. He even writes ironically that 'nowadays to violate a nun is *pietas*' (LB II 1082A).
- 15 Like Montaigne, Erasmus could swear his soul shrank from a lie, and like Montaigne's essay 'Liars,' his colloquies show his deep abhorrence of lying – a part of his nature, he says ('Sympathy' 1045:33–1046:7; see 'The Liar and the Man of Honour,' in which a master of the art of lying demonstrates how easy it is). Other expressions or intimations of this interest in the 'art' occur in many colloquies; and see *Lingua* also. Nevertheless he is well aware, as are all moralists and casuists, of the innumerable distinctions made by philosophers, dialecticians, orators, and poets, and practised if not analysed by men of the world. Erasmus proposes distinctions of veracity and mendacity in *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* (LB IX 1194A–1195D), but the analysis there is more laboured than eloquent. He is more effective when, in dialogue, he shows virtue and vice, truth and lies, in action.
- 16 Erasmus' word is *creditorum*, the opposite of what we might have expected, since Beatus refers to a debtor. In medieval Latin *creditor* was in some contexts equivalent to medieval French *créancier*, *débiteur*; it denoted one who stood surety for a debt. The conjuncture between *creditor* and *debtor* in the meaning of these lines is so close that 'creditor' is printed thus to indicate this nuance. See C. DuCange *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae Latinitatis* 6 vols (Paris 1733–6) sv *creditor*; F.E. Godefroy *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française* 10 vols (Paris 1881–1902) II sv *créancier*, and a quotation from 1523 in the *Oxford English Dictionary* sv 'creditor' 3.
- 17 A great many; see 'The Funeral' n76.
- 18 Pseudocheus explains his 'professional skill' in such transactions in 'The Liar and the Man of Honour.'
- 19 In a money economy, and with wars or the likelihood of wars a constant peril, princes required ever more financing to pay troops, and after the war ended to repay loans. A strict distinction between a nation's 'public debt' and a

sovereign's personal debts did not exist. Some rulers were more fortunate or more penurious than others; Henry VII of England, for instance, left a large fortune to his successor. Francis I, Maximilian I, and Charles V were plagued by debts. Kings could and did borrow vast sums in the money markets of Genoa, Antwerp, and elsewhere but had to pay for loans by additional taxes upon their subjects, forced loans by their nobles, and even alienation of crown lands or other economic concessions to the lenders. Of the bankers the greatest was the Fugger house of Augsburg, said to be the wealthiest family in Europe. More than once it was the means, probably the sole means, of keeping Charles V financially alive. If Francis I, after his defeat and capture at Pavia in February 1525, agreed to pay two million crowns as part of his ransom, and if his conqueror at Pavia, Charles V, needed six hundred thousand ducats to pay his mercenaries in Italy after that campaign (Francis Hackett *Francis the First* [New York 1937] 305, 309), Erasmus' 'even kings' is anything but exaggeration. Princes of the church too sometimes had to resort to bankers to pay annates or other 'costs of doing business' with the papacy.

- 20 Cf 'The Knight without a Horse' 885:20–1, 887:38. The derogatory description in lines 23–8 below is expanded in that colloquy.
- 21 Cf 'The Funeral' n46 on military training as a school for plundering.
- 22 So Xenophon *Instituta Laconica* 2.7–9 and *Anabasis* 4.6.14–15; Plato *Laws* 1.633B; and see *Apophthegmata* LB IV 144D–F.
- 23 Commonly associated with gamblers. On the cards themselves see an interesting account by Laura A. Smoller 'Playing Cards and Popular Culture in Sixteenth-Century Nuremburg' *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 17 no 2 (1986) 183–214.
- 24 The braggart soldier in Terence *Eunuchus*
- 25 Province in east and central Netherlands where Birckmann, another person Erasmus detested, came from. See the introduction to 'The Liar and the Man of Honour' and CEBR.

CHARON

Charon

First published as one of the *Colloquia* in the March 1529 edition. The last edition of the *Colloquia* published by Johann Froben came out in 1527. After his death in the autumn of that year the business was carried on by his son Hieronymus and Johann Herwagen, whom his widow married; in 1529 they were joined by her son-in-law, Nicolaus Episcopius. Herwagen left the firm in 1530.

'Charon' had an unusual history, for it was issued six years before appearing in the *Colloquia*. It was printed in the same volume with the *Catalogus omnium Erasmi Roterodami lucubrationum* prepared by Erasmus and issued by Froben in April 1523. The *Catalogus* was then enlarged and corrected and published in September 1524. The *Catalogus* is the first text (a1-c3) in that April 1523 volume (the enlarged text of September 1524 is now in CWE 9 291-364 as Ep 1341A). It is followed by Erasmus' letter (Ep 1342) to Marcus Laurinus; the longer version of Ep 1301 addressed to Louvain theologians; a *Libellus* (1522) by Jacob Ziegler against Zúñiga's attacks on Erasmus, accompanied by copious examples of Zúñiga's invectives (on these see Allen Ep 1260:203n); then the colloquy 'Charon'; and a colophon April 1523, not the new date of September 1524. 'Charon' is named in Allen I 40:17 / CWE 24 695:37 / CWE Ep 1341A:1568. Early 1523 may be therefore the most likely date of composition. At least a few copies of 'Charon' alone were printed as single booklets also (Franz Bierlaire *Erasme et ses Colloques: le livre d'une vie* [Paris 1977] 97). ASD I-3 575-84 prints both the April 1523 and the March 1529 texts of the dialogue. The 1529 text has a few differences from the earlier version; these are recorded in notes to the present translation.

BE 2nd series *Colloquia* I 199 states that the first edition of the *Colloquia* to contain 'Charon' and the eight dialogues that follow it in this volume ('A Meeting of the Philological Society,' 'A Marriage in Name Only,' 'The Imposture,' 'Cyclops,' 'Non-Sequiturs,' 'The Knight without a Horse,' 'Knucklebones,' and 'The Council of Women') was one published by Eucharius Cervicornus (Cologne 1528; no month date). Smith initially accepted this assertion (*Key* 44) but later rejected it. Elsbeth Gutmann repeated the claim in 1968 (*Die Colloquia familiaria des Erasmus von Rotterdam* [Basel and Stuttgart 1968] 94-6). That Erasmus would have given these nine dialogues, eight of them unprinted before, to Cervicornus, with whom he had only slight connections,

for a new and enlarged edition of the *Colloquia*, instead of publishing them through the Froben firm, is inherently improbable. Henry de Vocht solved the problem. In his introduction to *The Earliest English Translations of Erasmus' Colloquia* (Louvain 1928) he demonstrated that for both biographical and bibliographical reasons it is untenable to take the presence of these nine dialogues in a Cervicornus book dated simply '1528' as proof of their first appearance (xi–xii, with the notes). After their publication in the March 1529 Froben edition, they were quickly inserted as an *auctarium* in printed but unbound sheets of Cervicornus' book. The leaves are unsigned, whereas everything preceding and following the nine colloquies has signatures in regular order; nor are titles of the nine colloquies entered in the alphabetical index. How Cervicornus got hold of these dialogues is not known, but see Bierlaire 'Erasmus, les imprimeurs et les Colloques' *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* (1978) 108–9.

In theme and manner 'Charon' is clearly inspired by Lucian. A 1528 reprint of Erasmus' and More's Latin translations of Lucian (Lyons: Gryphius) 521–6 even includes Erasmus' dialogue, identifying it as his, perhaps to show how Lucianic a modern writer could be. Some of Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead* (12, 13, 14) satirize monarchs who would conquer the world. In others (4, 10, 22) Charon and Hermes compare notes. In 4 Charon complains that he is unable to pay Hermes for repairs to his ferry until wars or plagues bring him more business; in 22 he quarrels with a passenger who will not pay the fare. Lucian, in his dialogue called 'Charon,' has Hermes take Charon on a tour of the upper world, which the visitor finds depressingly full of vanity and folly: 'How absurd are the affairs of unhappy mortals!' This dialogue, like the others mentioned here, was often translated and imitated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Erasmus in his 'Charon' alludes to a favourite subject, the 'complaint of peace' in a world of wars. He does not mention such dramatic events as the capture and imprisonment of Francis I and the sack of Rome, both of which occurred after the 1523 text was published, but his readers in 1529 knew about them even if Charon does not. Francis had been captured at the battle of Pavia in February 1525 and held as hostage in Spain; see 'A Fish Diet' n79. When released in 1526, after the signing of the Treaty of Madrid, he joined with Milan, Florence, Venice, and the papacy in a league against Charles V. England supported the league. In the Italian campaigns that followed, the imperial forces were usually victorious. The fighting culminated in the famous sack of Rome by imperial soldiers in May 1527 (on this see Allen Epp 1831:16–22, 1839:110–12, 2059:1–9 – very brief comments on such a momentous disaster). A new Italian conflict broke

out, but after six months the pope began efforts to make peace. Charles rejected the terms and the war continued until August 1529 (Peace of Cambrai), a few months after this colloquy was printed. By this date the empire had won control of Italy and Francis again renounced his Italian claims.

In 1522–3 Erasmus had dedicated his Paraphrases on the Gospels to Charles v, Francis I, Henry VIII, and Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, and in prefatory letters called upon them to seek and preserve peace (Epp 1255, 1400, 1381, 1333). Similarly he had hoped that the pontificates of Leo X, Adrian VI, and now Clement VII would prove as calm as that of Julius II was stormy. By the mid-1520s the wars between Charles and Francis, incursions of the Turks, Lutheran ‘tumults,’ and the Peasants’ Revolt made Erasmus’ prediction in 1517 of a coming ‘age of gold’ (Allen Ep 566:31–40 / CWE Ep 566:35–45, addressed to Leo X) a sad miscalculation.

In some colloquies (‘The Soldier and the Carthusian,’ ‘Military Affairs,’ ‘Cyclops’) he ridicules mercenary soldiers. In ‘The Funeral’ he satirizes a general. In ‘A Fish Diet’ and ‘Charon’ the folly and cupidity of rulers themselves are attacked. ‘Charon’ likewise shows his detestation of compliant churchmen, whether prelates who by flattering princes incite them to war or priests and friars who assure the populace that ‘God is on our side.’ Erasmus had intuitions of a body of international law capable of arbitrating disputes and keeping peace among governments, but he never worked these ideas out; that task was to be resumed a century later by his countryman, Hugo Grotius. His writings had little or no direct political effect. Nevertheless as a propagandist for peace he produced some of the best and most widely read arguments on war and peace, and they are still worth reading.

Alfonso de Valdés, one of Charles v’s secretaries, a correspondent of Erasmus and like his brother Juan a member of a remarkable group of Spanish Erasmians, wrote two dialogues (both c 1529), *Lactancio* and *Mercurio y Carón*, in which he denounced the perfidy of Francis I in that king’s dealings with the emperor, placing the blame for the sack of Rome in 1527 on the policies of Clement VII and his incompetent advisers and exonerating the emperor from responsibility. *Mercurio y Carón* is indebted both to Lucian and to Erasmus’ ‘Charon.’ On this dialogue see Bataillon *Erasme et l’Espagne* 419–38; K.L. Selig ‘Zu Valdes’ Erasmisches Diálogo de “Mercurio y Caron”’ BHR 20 (1958) 17–24. *Lactancio* is translated with an introduction by John E. Longhurst (Albuquerque 1950).

John R. Hale’s *Renaissance War Studies* (London 1983) and *War and Society in Renaissance Europe 1450–1620* (New York 1985; repr Baltimore 1986) should not be missed by readers of this and other colloquies on war.

CHARON,¹ the spirit ALASTOR²

Charon Why the hustle and bustle, Alastor?

Alastor Well met, Charon. I was speeding to you.

5 **Charon** What's new?

Alastor I bring news that will delight you and Proserpina.³

Charon Out with it, then. Unload it.

Alastor The Furies⁴ have done their work zealously as well as successfully.

10 Not a corner of the earth have they left unravaged by hellish disasters, dissensions, wars, robberies, plagues: so much so that now, with their snakes let loose, they're completely bald. Drained of poisons, they roam about looking for whatever vipers and asps they can find, since they're as smooth-headed as an egg – not a hair on their crowns nor a drop of good poison in their breasts. So have your boat and oars ready, for there'll soon
15 be such a crowd of shades coming that I fear you can't ferry them all.

Charon No news to me.

Alastor Where did you learn it?

Charon Ossa⁵ brought it two days ago.

20 **Alastor** Can't get ahead of that goddess! But why are you loitering here without your boat, then?

Charon Business trip: I came here to get a good, strong trireme ready. My galley's so rotten with age and so worthless that it won't do for this job if what Ossa told me is true. Though⁶ what need was there of Ossa? The plain fact of the matter demands it: I've had a shipwreck.

25 **Alastor** You *are* dripping wet, undoubtedly. I thought you were coming back from a bath.

Charon Oh, no, I've been swimming out of the Stygian swamp.

Alastor Where have you left the shades?

Charon Swimming with the frogs.

30 **Alastor** But what did Ossa report?

Charon That the three rulers of the world,⁷ in deadly hatred, clash to their mutual destruction. Nor is any part of Christendom safe from the ravages of war, for those three have dragged all the rest into alliance. They're all in such a mood that none of them is willing to yield to another. Neither

35 Dane⁸ nor Pole⁹ nor Scot¹⁰ nor Turk,¹¹ in fact, is at peace; catastrophes are building up; the plague rages everywhere, in Spain, Britain, Italy, France.¹² In addition there's a new epidemic, born of difference of opinion.¹³ It has so corrupted everybody's mind that sincere friendship exists nowhere, but brother distrusts brother and husband and wife disagree. I've hopes of a
40 splendid slaughter one day, too, if the war of tongues and pens comes to actual blows.

Alastor Ossa reported everything quite correctly, for as the constant attendant and assistant of the Furies (who have never shown themselves more deserving of their name) I've seen more than this with my own eyes.

Charon But there's danger that some devil may turn up and preach peace
 5 all of a sudden – and mortal minds are fickle. I hear there's a certain Polygraphus¹⁴ up there who's incessantly attacking war with his pen and urging men to peace.

Alastor He's sung to deaf ears¹⁵ this long while. He once wrote a 'Complaint of Peace O'erthrown';¹⁶ now he's written the epitaph of peace dead and
 10 buried. On the other hand, there are some as helpful to our cause as the Furies themselves.

Charon Who are those?

Alastor Certain creatures in black and white cloaks and ash-gray tunics, adorned with plumage of various kinds. They never leave the courts of
 15 princes. They instil into their ears a love of war; they incite rulers and populace alike; they proclaim in their evangelical sermons that war is just, holy, and right.¹⁷ And – to make you marvel more at their audacity – they proclaim the very same thing on both sides.¹⁸ To the French they preach that God is on the French side: he who has God to protect him cannot be
 20 conquered. To the English and Spanish they declare this war is not the emperor's but God's: only let them show themselves valiant men and victory is certain. But if anyone is killed, he doesn't perish utterly but flies straight up to heaven,¹⁹ armed just as he was.

Charon And people believe these fellows?

Alastor What can a pretence of religion not achieve? Youth, inexperience, thirst for glory, anger, and natural human inclination swallow this whole. Thus people are easily imposed upon. And it's not hard to upset a cart that's already on the verge of collapse.

Charon I'll be glad to reward these creatures!²⁰

Alastor Give them a fine dinner. They like nothing better.

Charon A dinner of mallows, lupins, and leeks.²¹ That's the only fare we have, as you know.

Alastor Oh, no, it must be partridges, capons, and pheasants if you wish to be an acceptable host.

Charon But what makes them such warmongers? Or what advantage do
 35 they gain from this?

Alastor They make more profit from the dying than from the living. There are wills, masses for kinsmen, bulls, and many other sources of revenue not to be despised. In short, they prefer to buzz in camp rather than in their
 40 own hives. War spawns many bishops who in peacetime weren't worth a farthing.²²



Death and the Lansquenet

Albrecht Dürer, 1510

A powerful pictorial expression of a theme often met in Erasmus' writings
on war, the inevitability of death, and the soldier of fortune's
characteristic unreadiness for it

Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg

Charon A canny lot.

Alastor But why do you need a trireme?

Charon I don't – so long as I am willing to be shipwrecked in the middle of the swamp again.

5 **Alastor** Because of the crowd?

Charon Of course.

Alastor But you haul shades, not bodies. Now how light are shades?

Charon They may be water skippers,²³ but enough water skippers could sink a boat. Then²⁴ too, you know, the boat is unsubstantial.

10 **Alastor** But sometimes, I remember, when there was a crowd so large the boat couldn't hold them all, I saw three thousand shades hanging from your rudder and you didn't feel any weight.

Charon Granted there are such souls, which departed little by little from bodies worn away by consumption or hectic fever. But those plucked on the sudden from heavy bodies bring a good deal of corporeal substance along with them. Apoplexy, quinsy, plague, but especially war, send this kind.

15 **Alastor** Frenchmen or Spaniards don't weigh much, I suppose.

Charon Much less than others, though even their souls are not exactly featherweight. But from well-fed Britons and Germans²⁵ such shades come at times that lately I've hardly dared to ferry even ten, and unless I'd thrown them overboard I'd have gone down along with boat, rowers, and passage money.

Alastor A terrible risk!

Charon Meanwhile what do you think will happen when heavy lords, 25 Thrasos,²⁶ and swashbucklers²⁷ come along?

Alastor None of those who die in a just war come to you, I believe. For these, they say, fly straight to heaven.²⁸

Charon Where they may fly to, I don't know. I do know one thing: that whenever a war's on, so many come to me wounded and cut up that I'd be 30 surprised if any had been left on earth. They come loaded not only with debauchery and gluttony but even with bulls, benefices, and many other things.

Alastor But they don't bring these along with them. The souls come to you naked.

35 **Charon** True, but newcomers bring along dreams of such things.

Alastor So dreams are heavy?

Charon They weigh down my boat. Weigh down,²⁹ did I say? They've already sunk it. Finally, do you imagine so many obols weigh nothing?

Alastor Well, I suppose they are heavy if they're copper ones.

40 **Charon** So I've decided to look out for a vessel strong enough for the load.

Alastor Lucky you!

Charon How so?

Alastor Because you'll soon grow rich.

Charon From a lot of shades?

Alastor Of course.

- 5 **Charon** If only they'd bring their riches with them! As it is, those in the boat who lament the kingdoms, prelacies, abbacies, and countless talents of gold they left up there bring me nothing but an obol. And so everything I've scraped together in three thousand years has to be laid out for one trireme.

Alastor If you want to make money you have to spend money.

- 10 **Charon** Yet mortals, as I hear, do business better: with Mercury's help³⁰ they grow rich within three years.

Alastor But sometimes those same mortals go broke. Your profit is less but it's more certain.

- 15 **Charon** How certain I can't tell. If some god should turn up now and settle the affairs of princes, I'd be utterly ruined.

- Alastor** I'll see to it. Leave it to me and you can sleep sound on either ear.³¹ You've no reason to fear a peace within ten whole years.³² Only the Roman pontiff is zealous in urging peace,³³ but he washes a brick.³⁴ Cities, too, weary of their troubles, complain bitterly. People – I don't know who they
20 are – mutter that it's outrageous for human affairs to be turned topsy-turvy³⁵ on account of the personal grudges or ambitions of two or three men. But the Furies, believe me, will defeat counsel, no matter how good it is. – Yet what need was there for you to go above for this purpose? Haven't we workmen of our own? We've Vulcan³⁶ surely.

- 25 **Charon** Fine – if I wanted a bronze ship.

Alastor Labour's cheap.

Charon Yes, but we're short of timber.

Alastor What, aren't there any forests here?

Charon Even the groves in the Elysian fields have been used up.

- 30 **Alastor** What for?

Charon For burning shades of heretics.³⁷ So that we've been forced of late to mine coal from the bowels of the earth.

Alastor What, can't those shades be punished at less expense?

Charon This was the decision of Rhadamanthus.³⁸

- 35 **Alastor** When you've bought your trireme, where will you get rowers?

Charon My job is to hold the tiller;³⁹ the shades must row if they want passage.

Alastor But some haven't learned how to handle an oar.

- 40 **Charon** No distinction of persons with me: monarchs row and cardinals row, each in their turn, no less than common folk, whether they've learned or not.

Alastor Good luck⁴⁰ in getting a trireme at a bargain! I won't hold you up any longer. I'll take the good news to Orcus.⁴¹ But say, Charon –

Charon What?

Alastor Hurry back, so the crowd won't quickly overwhelm you.

- 5 **Charon** Oh, you'll meet over two hundred thousand on the bank already, besides⁴² those swimming in the swamp. But I'll hurry as much as I can. Tell 'em I'll be there right away.

NOTES

- 1 Ferryman of souls across the river Styx to Hades. Cf 'Inns' n34.
- 2 In Greek mythology a destructive, avenging spirit; a *genius malus*. See *Adagia* I i 72.
- 3 Consort of Hades. She spent six months each year on earth and six in the underworld. Alastor implies that she will be pleased to hear about wars and plagues, which provide many newcomers in Hades.
- 4 Spirits of punishment. They had poisonous serpents for hair; these they sent to torment the consciences of the wicked. They inflicted many kinds of torture, including wars, on sinful mortals. See Virgil *Aeneid* 7.323–571; *Adagia* IV i 1 LB II 953E–F; *Moriae encomium* LB IV 439B–440A, 484D / ASD IV-3 116:873–7, 117:814–8 / CWE 27 111, 139.
- 5 The goddess Rumour or *Fama*; *Adagia* I vi 25
- 6 Though . . . frogs.] Added in the March 1529 edition
- 7 The emperor Charles v, Francis I of France, and Henry VIII of England. For a summary of their alliances, enmities, and wars in the 1520s see 'A Fish Diet' 687:24–689:18 with the notes, especially nn79, 89, and the introduction to this colloquy 819–20 above. With the gloomy state of the world presented in this paragraph compare 'The New Mother' 592:17–35.
- 8 The reference may be due to Erasmus' acquaintance with the former king, Christian II (brother-in-law of Charles v), who went into exile in 1523. See *Puerpera* 'The New Mother' n6. His successor, Frederick I, was now actively supporting the Lutheran cause in Denmark.
- 9 nor Pole] Added in the March 1529 edition. See Ep 1819, a letter from Erasmus to King Sigismund I of Poland, commenting on Poland's difficulties with the Muscovites, Prussians, Tartars, and Turks and the question of a successor to the throne of Hungary, a matter of much concern to Poland.
- 10 Erasmus had very few contacts with Scots or Scotland after the death of Alexander Stewart, who had been a pupil of his in Italy in 1508–9. A natural son of King James IV of Scotland, Stewart became an archbishop and chancellor of Scotland. Father and son both perished in the battle of Flodden Field, September 1513. See Allen Ep 604:2n and 'A Fish Diet' n118. To say that the Scots were not 'at peace' at this time was a vague but safe affirmation; internally the kingdom was seldom at peace.
- 11 See 'The New Mother' n19.
- 12 Since typhus, bubonic plague, and other pestilences, including syphilis, were recurrent in Erasmus' time we cannot tell whether he refers here to a specific

epidemic. Probably not, but if he does the allusion may be to the plague which is said to have killed more than half of the French forces who were besieging Naples in the summer of 1528.

- 13 Lutheranism; an interesting remark on its effects at this date
- 14 Polygraphus] 'Erasmus' in the 1523 edition. 'Polygraphus' here is a semi-facetious term for an incessant scribbler. Erasmus uses it of Luther (Allen Epp 1173:87–8, 1236:76–7) and of himself in *Ciceronianus* (LB I 1013D / ASD I-2 681:3).
- 15 *Adagia* I iv 87
- 16 Erasmus' eloquent *Querela pacis undique gentium eiectae profligataeque* (1517). Text in LB IV 625A–642D and ASD IV-2 61–100; other critical editions by Holborn and by Y. Rémy and R. Dunil-Marquebreucq (Brussels 1953). It was widely read both in Latin and in translations. Thomas Paynell's English version (1559) is well known; see now the translation by Betty Radice in CWE 27 293–322. On its classical and Christian sources see R.H. Bainton 'The *Querela Pacis* of Erasmus' ARG 42 (1951) 32–48.
Querela pacis was preceded by two memorable essays in the *Adagia*: *Scarabeus aquilam quaerit* on kings (III vii 1) and *Dulce bellum inexpertis* on war (IV i 1), both from 1515. The second and longer was expanded from a few lines in the 1508 *Adagia*. Both essays were printed separately in 1517. In addition there was the important treatise of 1516, *Institutio principis christiani*. These four writings from 1515–17 climaxed but by no means concluded Erasmus' efforts in behalf of international peace; efforts which continued until the end of his life. His *De bello Turcico* came out in 1530. 'Now he's written the epitaph' does not refer to another composition but is a figurative way of saying that the chances of peace are even dimmer than they were earlier; melancholy news except to Charon.
- 17 Regulars: monks, friars, abbots. A similar passage in *Querela pacis* mentions Dominicans and Franciscans by name (LB IV 634F–635A / ASD IV-2 82:504–13 / CWE 27 308). That they 'never leave the courts of princes' echoes a remark in *Adagia* II viii 65 (LB II 654F).
 'Whoever brings tidings of Christ brings tidings of peace. Whoever preaches war preaches one who is the very opposite of Christ' (*Querela pacis* LB IV 630B / ASD IV-2 70:237–8 / CWE 27 300). Condemnation of clerics whom he thought too complacent in endorsing their rulers' wars is found in all Erasmus' major writings on government and the Christian in society. A good brief example is a passage in *Adagia* IV i 1 (LB II 956E–957B), a long one in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* (LB VI 317C–321F). The clergy have, and must have, a special obligation to denounce war and preach peace. For some of Julius II's war-making Erasmus blamed the instigations of prelates (*Querela pacis* LB IV 635A / ASD IV-2 82:509–12 / CWE 27 308). He was convinced that such clerical aggressiveness was more prevalent among 'modern' churchmen than among earlier ones (*Adagia* IV i 1 LB II 964C–E).
- 18 Contrast the behaviour of priests in More's *Utopia*. On the battlefield they pray first of all for peace, next for victory, but victory with a minimum of bloodshed. If their own side wins they try to restrain the troops from pursuing and slaughtering the enemy (Yale CWM 4 230–1).
- 19 An idea with a long history, possibly an inference from early beliefs about Christian martyrs, of whom Tertullian writes that they alone go straight to

- heaven (*De anima* 55 CSEL 20 388–9; *De resurrectione carnis* 43 CSEL 47 89). Whatever its origins, the assumption or promise of heaven immediately to soldiers killed in battle, whether in crusades or the more common wars fought by European states, recurs in Erasmus' time. In *Julius exclusus* the pope refers to his promise, 'in mighty bulls, that all who fought under Julius' banners should fly straight up to heaven, no matter what sort of life they had led before' (Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* 78:252–7 / CWE 27 174).
- 20 In 'Patterns' 15:30–2 it is suggested that they should be put in the front lines.
- 21 Cf 'Courtship' 258:27–31 and 'Penny Pinching' 982:6.
- 22 Erasmus assures us that he had known some men whose praise of wars made them bishops (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 27). 'Bishops are not ashamed to frequent the camp; the cross is there, the body of Christ is there, the heavenly sacraments become mixed up in this worse than hellish business, and the symbols of perfect charity are brought into these bloody conflicts. Still more absurd, Christ is present in both camps, as if fighting against himself' (*Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 610C / ASD IV-1 218:601–4 / CWE 27 286 / Born 255).
- 23 Plautus *Persa* 244
- 24 Then . . . unsubstantial.] Added in the March 1529 edition
- 25 Germans] 'Swabians' instead of 'Germans' in 1523 edition
An Italian visitor to England in 1497 observed that people there 'eat very frequently, at times more than is suitable' (*Two Italian Accounts of Tudor England* ed and trans C.V. Malfatti [Barcelona 1953] 37). *A Relation of England* (c 1500) confirms this report. See 'A Fish Diet' n247. Britons take pride in their hearty meals, says Folly (LB IV 448B / ASD IV-3 128:61 / CWE 27 117). When the French spy a man with a big belly they say 'he's as full as an Englishman, just as they ascribe heavy drinking to us' (that is, to Germans; *Adagia* II ii 68). Germans, Luther concedes, were notorious for gluttony and drinking, 'as though it were our special vice' (*An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation* WA 6 467:7–10 / LW 44 214).
- 26 Thraso is a braggart soldier in Terence *Eunuchus*.
- 27 swashbuckler] Pyrgopolinices in editions from March 1529 to September 1531; Polymachaeroplacidae in the March 1533 edition. Pyrgopolinices ('tower-town taker') is the braggart captain in Plautus *Miles gloriosus*. Polymachaeroplacides ('son of many sabre strokes') is a character in Plautus *Pseudolus*; the spelling of the name varies slightly in early editions. In English 'swashbuckler' fits both names in this context.
- 28 On the concept of 'just war' see the introduction to 'Military Affairs' 54 and 'The New Mother' n19. 'They speak of a just war when princes play a match of which the outcome is to exhaust and oppress the commonwealth; they speak of peace when that is the very object against which they conspire among themselves' (*Adagia* III iii 1 LB II 775D–E / CWE 34 270–1). A truly Christian teacher never approves of war; and if ever he does seem to allow it, he does so with the greatest reluctance and sadness (*Adagia* IV i 1 LB II 964B). If just wars exist, they are those fought in self-defence when one's country is invaded by a barbarous foe bent on conquest. But wars fought between one Christian society and another are intolerable scandals and disasters (see *Querela pacis* LB IV 637F–638B / ASD IV-2 90:671–87 / CWE 27 314).

A Christian concept of just war is usually traced to Augustine Epp 138.12–15 and especially 189.4–6. Erasmus did not dissent from the Augustinian judgment but had to deal with states and societies officially Christian and with an ecclesiastical establishment containing clerics of many kinds. However widely read his writings on peace, the behaviour of heads of states and their advisers did not change in the fashion he was pleased to imagine in the scene between Charles and Francis in 'A Fish Diet' 688:18–689:18. In 'Charon' and other dialogues his powers of satire and irony present his opinions less argumentatively but more vividly, at least for some readers. Finally it must be added that even pagan or otherwise non-Christian princes who protect public peace by means of just wars and by just laws are serving Christ (preface to the 1518 edition of *Enchiridion*; Allen Ep 858:230–9 / CWE Ep 858:242–52 / CWE 66 13–14). But at times Erasmus tended to agree with the Ciceronian dictum that the most unjust peace is preferable to the most just war (*Ad familiares* 6.6.6), an opinion Colet dared to voice when preaching before Henry VIII in 1512. Colet found himself in some trouble afterwards when opponents tried to embarrass him. Erasmus tells the story (Allen Ep 1211:557–616 / CWE Ep 1211:606–73; there is a longer account in Lupton *Life of Colet* 189–93). In addition to the studies of Erasmus' pacifism and his opinions on just war mentioned in earlier pages consult those by R. Liechtenhan 'Die politische Hoffnung des Erasmus und ihr Zusammenbruch' in *Gedenkschrift* 144–65; O. Schottenloher 'Lex naturae und Lex Christi bei Erasmus' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 293–8; P. Brachin 'Vox clamantis in deserto: réflexions sur le pacifisme d'Erasme' in *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia* II 247–75; José A. Fernandez 'Erasmus on the Just War' in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34 (1973) 209–25; John C. Olin *Six Essays on Erasmus* (New York 1979) 17–31.

- 29 Weigh down, did I say . . . copper ones.] Added in the March 1529 edition
- 30 *favente Mercurio*. Cf *Adagia* I i 72 and 'Patterns' n59; cf also *Adagia* IV vii 2: *Mercurio dextro*. Mercury was the god of trade and the patron of merchants.
- 31 Proverbial. *Adagia* I viii 19; Terence *Heautontimorumenos* 342
- 32 This sentence in the 1523 edition was left unchanged in the March 1529 text. The war ended in the summer of 1529.
- 33 When the 1523 edition appeared the pope was Adrian VI. He died in September of that year and was succeeded by Clement VII. 'What has become of papal authority?' asks Peace in *Querela pacis* (LB IV 636C–D / ASD IV-2 86:585 / CWE 27 311). The same question is asked in Allen Ep 1238:65–6 / CWE Ep 1238:73.
- 34 Wastes time in useless activity; *Adagia* I iv 48
- 35 *Adagia* I iii 85
- 36 We've Vulcan . . . labour's cheap.] Omitted in the 1523 edition. Vulcan was identified by the Romans with the Greek Hephaestus, god of fire and smithy.
- 37 For a few fairly recent instances between 1523 and 1527 see Allen Epp 1384:2n, 1388:7n, 1401:15n, 1540:20n. Burnings in England are very seldom, if ever, noted in Erasmus' correspondence; for these one must turn to Foxe. In the month after the publication of 'Charon' in the *Colloquia* of March 1529, Louis de Berquin was burned as a relapsed heretic in Paris. One reason for persecution of him by the Sorbonne was his tendentious French translations of Erasmus' *Querela pacis*, *Modus orandi Deum*, *Encomium matrimonii*, and nearly all of *Inquisitio de fide* (see the introduction to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage'

281). Erasmus lamented his terrible fate but thought him reckless and obstinate. See Allen Epp 2158:91–120, 2188:250–75. Berquin's translations of *Querela pacis* and *Inquisitio de fide* (both 1525) are reproduced in facsimile and provided with extensive introductions and notes by Emile V. Telle (Geneva 1978, 1979).

The grim joke in 'Charon' about the scarcity and cost of firewood because of the burning of heretics occurs earlier in Erasmus' letters; see Allen Epp 239:37–8, 240:38–9 / CWE Epp 239:41–3, 240:42–4.

38 Just and incorruptible judge of the dead; *Adagia* II ix 30, 31

39 *Adagia* III i 28

40 *dextro Mercurio*; *Adagia* IV vii 2. See n30 above.

41 God of the underworld, often identified with Pluto and Dis; also a synonym for the underworld, as in 'The Funeral' 774:3

42 besides . . . swamp] Added in the March 1529 edition

A MEETING OF THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Synodus grammaticorum

First printed in the *Colloquia* in the edition of March 1529. On this date see introduction to 'Charon' 818–19.

In this colloquy Erasmus takes a holiday from more serious labours to settle a few scores by a brief and amusing satire of three old enemies, Paris theologians. Attacks on his edition and translation of the New Testament, his Annotations and Paraphrases, *Colloquia*, and other writings cost him time and trouble; they fill nearly five hundred columns in LB IX. In the age of print, opportunities for long and frequent exchanges, friendly or hostile, between scholars were plentiful. In Erasmus' fields of biblical, theological, and literary scholarship the record of controversies is a voluminous and at times melancholy testimony to the vigour and persistence of polemical activity. When aided by imagination and wit, controversies, like satire, could produce literary art. 'A Meeting of the Philological Society' is satire but cannot compare with *Moriae encomium* or *Ciceronianus* as literature; yet it achieves its purpose, which is ridicule.

This dialogue is a belated thrust at opponents in Paris whom Erasmus held responsible for instigating the faculty of theology's censure of the *Colloquia* in May 1526 and denunciation of the work as irreverent and dangerous to youth. Erasmus added to the June 1526 edition a spirited defence, 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*.' In 1525, 1526, and 1527 he wrote against two of his most persistent Paris critics, Noël Bédæ and Pierre Cousturier. In March 1529 he published this colloquy and in the next edition (September 1529) inserted additions to 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' to bring it up to date. Still later, in 1532, he published a long reply to his Parisian detractors, *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* (LB IX 813E–954E).

On Bédæ, 'swimming beet' as he is called on 834:2, see 'Patterns' n35, Allen Ep 1571 introduction, and CEBR. An indefatigable academic defender of conservative causes affecting religion, he succeeded Jan Standonck as master of the Collège de Montaigu (see 'A Fish Diet' n287). Another adversary mentioned in the dialogue was Guillaume Duchesne (n18 below). Of these heresy-hunting theologians, one of Erasmus' principal targets here was Pierre Cousturier (see CEBR), a Carthusian (once of the Sorbonne) whose published *Apologeticum in novos anticomaritas* denounced those who held what he considered unacceptable notions about the Virgin Mary. Erasmus caricatures these divines as obscurantist and pedantic and laughs at them in a manner both philological and scurrilous, a manner that may

have reminded his readers, with good reason, of the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*.

Apparently the idea for this composition came from a letter to Erasmus by a Carthusian friend, Levinus Ammonius, dated 31 July 1528. As an earnest scholar with Erasmian sympathies, Ammonius had a strong dislike of Cousturier. His letter of July 1528 comments on Cousturier's book against the *anticomaritae*, mocks him for this ludicrous solecism (on which see n3 below) and makes remarks about a certain plant, called *comaron*, adopted by Erasmus in the colloquy (n29 below). See Allen Ep 2016:45–64. When the colloquy was published, Ammonius relished its gibes at his fellow monk (Allen Ep 2197:79–85).

On Sutor and Erasmus see further Heinz Holeczek *Humanistische Bibelphilologie als Reformproblem bei Erasmus von Rotterdam, Thomas More und William Tyndale* (Leiden 1975) 186–223.

ALBINUS, BERTULF, CANTHELUS, DIPHYLUS, EUMENIUS,
FABULLUS, GADITANUS¹

Albinus Anyone in this group good at arithmetic?

5 **Bertulf** What on earth for?

Albinus To determine how many of us grammarians are assembled here.

Bertulf No need for a counting-board, surely; our fingers can tell us. I count you on my thumb, myself on my index finger, Canthelus on the middle finger, Diphylus on the ring finger, Eumenius on the little finger. Now
10 switching to the left hand, I count Fabullus on my thumb, Gaditanus on my index finger. So unless I'm mistaken, we are seven. But what's the good of knowing this?

Albinus Because I hear the number seven constitutes a quorum at a meeting.

Bertulf What meeting do you mean?

15 **Albinus** There's a serious matter that has tormented me for a long time, and not me alone but many, including men by no means unlearned. I'll lay it before you, to have the question settled once for all by the authority of this congress.

Canthelus Must be something extraordinary if you don't have the answer,
20 Albinus, and if it has long tormented a mind as penetrating as yours. Hence we want to know for ourselves what this thing is – for I reply on behalf of us all.

Albinus Attend, then, all of you; lend me your ears and minds. Many eyes are better than one.² Can any of you explain the meaning of the word
25 *anticomarita*?³

Miseratur⁹. i. miam impetrat⁹. a mi
sero: raris. Inuitat. me. p. Uterem
me. cor. i. abundam. vber. betis. ois
ge. Ifastidiosi pau perū. q nō pnt vi
dere uel audire paupes. cū genituo
Dietico. vltima acuta. Cameli. me.
p. mas. ge. i. aialis gibbosi. Prestri
cti. i. ante tacti ul stricti. a pstringo
gis. qd est valde uel ante tangē uel
stringere. Improbis. me. cor. i. non
pbis. Perseuerat. pe. p. Uteriozem
i. abundantiozem.

Sup declaratione regu
le fratrum minorum.

Satur⁹. i. semiat⁹. a sero
tis. seu. sati. Gnatos. i. do
ctos. Desides. i. pigros. de
ses. fidis. cois ge. Colon⁹. i. inhabi
tor. Delectu. i. differētia uel oiscre
tiōe. mas. ge. 7 q̄te decli. a delego
gis. legi. Curia vti⁹ b noie sine. c.
Almū. i. sc̄m. Infitū. me. cor. i. imif
sum. ab infero: retis. in situs sū. ad
modū furculi q arbori iheri⁹. Emu
latores. i. iuidos psecutores. Discri
minosa. i. piculosa. Agentibus. i. cō
uersantib⁹. Eadē. me. cor. Allisit. i.
submersit. Degentiū. i. viuētium.
Cōsternauit. i. deiecit. Asterno. nas
trū coiter ē teponēs. Amfractus. i.
toruosus excusatiōib⁹. amfractus.
mas. ge. 7 q̄te decli. vis quā tenet
lepus i fugiēdo. Disserere. i. expli
cate. Sup ipsa regula. i. de. Edidim⁹
i. opusim⁹. Serios⁹. i. studiosius.
a sercio. Cum. i. partim. Insultus. i.
aggressuras uel impet⁹. Emergen
tiū. i. ctingētiū. Scrupulū. i. remor

sū. ppe lapill⁹ ē. mas. ge. Nilomi
nus. pe. cor. i. nō min⁹. Subneclit
i. iūgit. Succinctorie. i. breui⁹. In
dicat. me. p. i. iponat. Eatenus. pe.
cor. i. intātū. Cōdecet. me. cor. Quo
i. inquātū. Abdicationē. i. terti ex
clusionē. Alueos. i. tiuulos. Locu
los. i. bursas. Condecens. me. cor.
Conijci⁹. i. oñdi⁹ uel pbatur. cōij
cio icis. cōjciō: ceris. Quinimo. i.
potius. Abdicet. me. cor. i. sepatet.
Quolibet. pe. cor. i. aliq̄ mō. Quo
min⁹. i. ut nō. one ptes. Subrogan
oā. i. substituēdā. Inguētū. i. imi
nēti siue instāti. Tactū. i. spatium
mas. ge. 7 q̄te decli. Inneū. i. ad
iūctū. Presto. i. i pntia. Serie. i. scri
ptura. Prefat. i. pdict. Superit. pe.
cor. Coaptet. i. ad cōgruas expēsas
p te emēda se testingat. Seriosa. i.
studiosa 7 delibata. Ichib⁹. i. pcul
siōib⁹. mas. ge. 7 q̄te decli. Astituit⁹
i. affirmat siue pbat. Aduertētes. i.
cōsiderātes. Passim. i. coiter uel in
oifferēt. Fulciāt. i. moueāt 7 astrin
gāt. Nacten⁹. i. hucusq̄. Cenobijs
i. monasterijs. neu. ge. Adijciēs. i.
addēs. Quolibet. pe. cor. i. aliq̄ mō
Vir⁹. i. venenū. neu. ge. p tres cas⁹
s. notatiū. accusatiū 7 vocatiū
Ausu. i. audacia. mas. ge. 7 q̄te decli.

Expliat expōitiōes 7 correctōes
vocabuloz libz q appellat Mam
trect⁹ tā biblie q̄ alioz plurimoz
libroz. Impresse Venetijs p stan
ciscū de Mailbrun 7 i Nicolaum de
franchfochia socios.

MCCCCXXVI

Laus deo.

Mammetrectus, a glossary of the Bible and other religious works
by Johannes Marchesinus of Reggio, a Franciscan, was first printed
in Mainz in 1470. Erasmus deplored and denounced it.

This is the final page and colophon of the Venice 1476 edition.
From the Marjorie Walter Goodhart Medieval Library, Bryn Mawr College

Bertulf Nothing simpler. It means a kind of beet called by the ancients 'swimming beet,'⁴ with a twisted and knotty stalk and remarkably insipid; it has a foul stench if you come in contact with it – as bad as stinking bean-trefoil.⁵

Canthelus 'Swimming beet,' eh? Nasty beast, rather.⁶ Who ever heard or
5 read of the name 'swimming beet' before?

Bertulf On the contrary, this is clearly taught by *Mammetrectus*, as it's commonly but mistakenly called, since the right name is *Mammothreptus*, 'grandma's darling,' as you might say.⁷

Albinus What sort of title is this?

10 **Bertulf** You're to understand that the book contains nothing but sheer delights, because grandmas are generally fonder of grandsons than mothers are of their own children.

Albinus Certainly the work you describe is most enjoyable, for when I came across the volume recently I nearly died laughing.⁸

15 **Canthelus** Where did you find the book? It's very seldom met with.

Bertulf The abbot of St Bavo's, Livinus by name,⁹ took me after lunch at Bruges into his private library, which the old gentleman, in his desire to leave some memorial of himself to posterity, was furnishing at no little expense. Not
20 a book there that wasn't manuscript, and on parchment, too; none that was not adorned with various pictures and bound in velvet and gold. Indeed, the very size of that collection of books had a certain indescribable grandeur about it.

Albinus What books were they?

Bertulf Oh, all the famous ones: *Catholicon*,¹⁰ *Brachylogus*,¹¹ Ovid allegorized,¹² and countless others. Among them I found also the very
25 charming *Mammothreptus*. With these delights I came upon 'swimming beet.'

Albinus Why do they call it 'swimming?'

Bertulf I'll tell you what I read – let the author vouch for it. Because, says he, it grows in damp and rotten places, and never better than in filth or dung – saving your presence.¹³

30 **Albinus** So it has a disagreeable smell?

Bertulf A smell no excrement could beat.

Albinus Isn't this vegetable good for anything?

Bertulf Oh, yes, it's highly prized.

Albinus By hogs or asses or Cyprian oxen,¹⁴ perhaps.

35 **Bertulf** No, by men; and fussy men at that. There's a race, the Pelini, who have long-drawn-out parties. The last round of drinks they call in their tongue the 'resumptive'¹⁵ – dessert or sweetmeats,¹⁶ as we should say.

Albinus What fine dessert!

Bertulf The rule of this drinking party is that the host is free to serve
40 whatever he pleases. The guests are forbidden to refuse it but must try to take it in good part.

Albinus What if he served hemlock or warmed-over cabbage?¹⁷

Bertulf Whatever's served must be eaten in silence then and there. At home, however, they're at liberty to vomit up whatever they've eaten. For this purpose they usually serve swimming beet or anticomarita (it's the same thing, whichever name you use). They mix some oak bark¹⁸ and a lot of garlic with it – that's how they make a salad.¹⁹

Albinus Who has persuaded them to accept so barbarous a rule?

Bertulf Custom, more powerful than any tyrant.²⁰

Albinus It's a sad finale you describe if the result's so unpleasant.

10 **Bertulf** I've had my say, without prejudice to anyone who might have something more correct to add.

Canthelus But I've discovered that the ancients had a fish they called anticomarita.

Bertulf Name the author.

15 **Canthelus** I can show you the book; I can't tell you the name of the author. It's written in French but according to Hebrew forms.

Bertulf What does an anticomarita fish look like?

Canthelus It has black scales all over except for a white belly.

20 **Bertulf** I think you'll make the fish into a Cynic in a long cloak.²¹ What does it taste like?

Canthelus Nothing's more disagreeable. Why, it's a plague. It breeds in stinking pools and sometimes in privies; it's sluggish and muddy. The mere taste of it causes a thick phlegm you can hardly rid yourself of by vomiting. It's common in the land called Celtithrace²² – considered a delicacy there, where eating meat is more hateful than murder.

25 **Albinus** Damned country with its anticomarita!

Canthelus²³ That's as much as I have to say about it; I wouldn't want to prejudice anyone by my opinion.

Diphylus What need to look for an explanation of this word from
30 *Mammothreptus* or Hebrew writings when the etymology of the term is self-evident? Girls who are ill-mated are said to be *anticomaritae*,²⁴ inasmuch as they have feeble old men for husbands. It's not surprising that the scribes have turned *quo* into *co*, since the letters *c*, *q*, and *k* are cognates.

Eumenius There would be something in what Diphylus said if the
35 expression were Latin. To me it seems Greek, made up of three parts: *ἀντί*, that is, 'against'; *κώμη*, 'village'; and *ὑαρίζειν*, that is, 'to prattle,' as women do. Hence, with omicron elided by synaloepha,²⁵ you have *anticomarita*, 'one who annoys everybody with boorish chatter.'

Fabullus My friend Eumenius has spoken to the point,²⁶ to be sure. But in
40 my opinion the expression is made from as many words as it has syllables. For *ἀν* means *ἄνους*; *τι*, *τίλλων*; *κω*, *κώδια*; *μα*, *μάλα*; *ρύ*, *ρύπαρά*; (to spell it

with an iota is wrong); *τα, τάλας*. From these you get 'mad and miserable, plucking the hairs of dirty hides.'

Albinus The swimming beet Bertulf mentioned just now is fit nourishment for such work.

5 **Bertulf** Anticomarita for an anticomarita, no doubt.

Gaditanus You've all spoken to the point, but I think a disobedient wife is called *anticomarita* by syncope²⁷ (of *antidicomarita*), because she always opposes her husband.

Albinus If we accept such figures of speech, market-places [*fora*] will be
10 derived from dysentery [*foria*] and rabbit [*cuniculus*] will turn into cuckoo [*cuculus*].

Bertulf But Albinus, who is the consul in this senate, has not yet given his opinion.

Albinus I've nothing of my own to offer, but I won't hesitate to submit what
15 I learned recently from my host, a chatterbox of a fellow who when talking would change his story oftener than a nightingale his song.²⁸ He swore the word was Chaldean, composed of three parts. Of these, he said, *anti* means 'stubborn and hare-brained'; *comar*, 'rock';²⁹ *ita*, 'of a cobbler.'³⁰

Bertulf Who ever credited a rock with brains?

20 **Albinus** Nothing absurd about that, if only you change the gender.³¹

Gaditanus The common saying 'As many opinions as there are men'³² is illustrated perfectly in this assembly. What's the decision, then? The opinions can be counted but not so divided that the majority defeats the minority.

Albinus Then let the better part defeat the worse.

25 **Gaditanus** But for that another assembly would be needed, for every man thinks his own bride the fairest.³³

Albinus If that were true, we'd have fewer adulteries. But I've an easy solution. Let's draw lots with beans.³⁴ Whoever wins shall decide for us all.

Canthelus But the lot falls on you. Wasn't I right?

30 **Albinus** I like best the first and last explanations.

Canthelus If I may speak for the company, we all accept that.

Albinus Come, let this be one of those matters it is not lawful to question.

Canthelus Of course.

Albinus If anyone differs, what shall be his punishment?

35 **Canthelus** He shall be labelled in capital letters:³⁵ 'HERETIC IN GRAMMAR.'

Albinus I'll add – luckily,³⁶ I hope – what I believe should not be omitted. I'll inform my friends of what I learned from one Syrus, a doctor.

Bertulf What's that?

Albinus If you crush swimming beet, oak gall, and leather-blackening³⁷ in a
40 mortar, then sprinkle six ounces of dung on it and make it into a poultice, it's an instant remedy for dog mange and hog itch.

Bertulf But look, Albinus, you who bring this business of anticomarita upon us all, in just what author is the word found?

Albinus I'll tell you, but in your ear and yours alone.

Bertulf Agreed, but on condition that I alone may whisper it in turn to just
5 one person.

Albinus But units multiplied finally become thousands.

Bertulf You're right. When once you've made a dyad from a monad, the flow of the dyad is no longer in your control.

Albinus What's known to few can be concealed; what many share, cannot. –
10 Triad, however, refers to a multiplicity.³⁸

Bertulf Of course. Whoever had three wives at the same time would be said to have many, but would a man who had three hairs on his head or three teeth in his mouth be said to have many or few?

Albinus Sophist, lend me your ear.

15 **Bertulf** What do I hear? This is no less absurd than if the Greeks were unable to name the city they launched so many ships against, calling it Sutri³⁹ instead of Troy.

Albinus But this sage has lately come down from the clouds.⁴⁰ Unless the heavenly power had come in person to the rescue of human affairs, we'd
20 have been searching this long while for true men, piety, philosophy, letters.

Bertulf Really, this fellow belongs in the front rank of Folly's favourites. He deserved to be called Arch-Fool hereafter, along with his Anticomaritans.

NOTES

1 Of the seven speakers in the dialogue, the only one identifiable as an acquaintance of the author is Hilarius Bertholf, a secretary and messenger of Erasmus in 1522–24. On him see CEBR. He appears in three other colloquies; see 'Inns' n1. Other speakers in the present dialogue are merely labelled: Albinus 'whitewasher,' Canthelus 'ass,' Eumenius 'gracious,' Fabullus 'talkative,' Gaditanus 'Spaniard,' we would say; Athenaeus 2.50e–51a uses the name Diphylus in a passage following one that alludes to the arbutus or wild strawberry, a plant contributing to one of the jokes in the dialogue (see n29 below).

2 Proverbial. It is quoted in Richard Hooker *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Politie* 7.14.4. I do not find it in *Adagia*, but see Tilley E268.

3 Pierre Cousturier, to Erasmus' mind the most stupid and detestable of his critics, had published a book against those he regarded as detractors of the Virgin Mary, *Apologeticum in novos anticomaritas* (Paris: Jean Petit 1526). This title contained a blunder that Erasmus seized upon with pleasure. For *maritae* means 'wives' if a noun, 'wedded' if an adjective; Cousturier ought to have written *antimariani* or *antidicomariani* (as Erasmus says in 'The Usefulness of the Colloquies' 1105:19–20), since his subject was Mary. A charitable reader might have assumed that the

error was the compositor's, not the author's, but Erasmus welcomed it as an opportunity to expose Cousturier's culpable ignorance. The harshness in this colloquy is intentional, for its aim is ridicule, and the best way to ridicule is to humiliate a pretender to learning by showing him to be an ignorant, conceited fool. See also n10 below on the article 'Antidicomaritae' in *Catholicon*.

The ancient Antidicomarians or Antidicomarianites, members of the Ebionite sect of Jewish Christians in Palestine, denied the perpetual virginity of Mary. The name was applied by Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis (a contemporary of Augustine and Jerome), who writes on them in chapter 78 of his *Panarion* (text in *Epiphanii episcopi Constantiae opera* ed W. Dindorf 5 vols in 3 [Leipzig 1859–62] III part 1 494–527 and in PG 42 833–86). The *editio princeps* of his major writings did not appear until 1544. Erasmus had read the very brief reference to the Antidicomarians in Augustine *De haeresibus* 56 (PL 42 40 and 46) and in Jerome's defence of the doctrine of the Virgin Birth and of Mary's perpetual virginity (*Adversus Helvidium* PL 23 [1883] 193–216 / NPNF 2nd series VI 334–46). Erasmus believed in the perpetual virginity but denied that it could be proved from Scripture. See 'Faith' n42, *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 5C–10E, and 'The Sermon,' which like the present colloquy was pertinent to current discussions and controversies about Mary.

Thomas More was the first to use *antidicomariani* 'Mary's adversaries' in English (*Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* [1532] book 3 [Yale CWM 8 part 1 315]).

- 4 The adjective is *natatilem*, a pun on 'Natalis,' the Latin form of Noël Bédard's name.
- 5 Anagyris. Pliny says it has a strong smell (*Naturalis historia* 27.30). See *Adagia* I i 65.
- 6 *Natatilem betam . . . cacatilem bestiam*. The last word may be indebted to 1 Cor 15:32, which Erasmus had quoted when commenting on Cousturier in 1526 (Allen Ep 1678:23–6), and to Titus 1:12.
- 7 *Mammothrectus*, *Mammothrepton*, *Mammothreptos*, *Mammaethreptus* are variant titles of this medieval dictionary of the Bible and other religious subjects. It is attributed to Johannes Marchesinus of Reggio, a Franciscan, and was first printed in 1470. By calling it 'Grandma's darling' (cf *Ecclesiastes* LB V 977D–E) Erasmus hints at the book's character as pap for beginners, in this case clerics who must preach. In addition to brief interpretations and commentary on Scripture it provides aid to priests by sections on orthography, accents in pronunciation of names and words in the Bible, information on hymns, saints' lives, and so on: elementary stuff, but in an age when seminaries for the training of clergy did not exist, many priests needed all the help they could get. Like *Catholicon* and *Brachylogus* it is mentioned contemptuously by Erasmus when he wishes to belittle the learning, or lack of learning, in earlier times, for example in *Antibarbari* CWE 23 34, 36, 67 and Allen Epp 337:317, 535:29–30 / CWE Epp 337:330, 535:33; see Allen *Age of Erasmus* chapter 2, especially 53–5; Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 202–4.
- 8 Seneca *Epistulae morales* 113.26; *Adagia* IV i 86
- 9 The abbot of St Bavo's in Ghent at this time was Lieven Hugenoy; see CEBR. He was well known to Erasmus, who treats him and his library with a certain condescension here, though a decade earlier he was indebted to him for

permission to examine a manuscript of the Latin Gospels there (Allen Ep 373 introduction). In his first will (1527) Erasmus names this abbot as one of the persons who was to receive a copy of his collected works. His final will (1536) made no provision for such an edition. See 'The Return to Basel' 1124.

- 10 A large grammar and dictionary, in some respects an encyclopaedia, of the Latin Bible (thirteenth century) by Giovanni Balbus of Genoa, a Dominican; printed in Mainz in 1460 (photographic reprint London 1971), with an eloquent colophon possibly by Gutenberg. It deals with syntax, prosody, rhetoric, biblical names, and a variety of other subjects. It was reissued as late as 1506 by one of Erasmus' publishers, the humanist printer Josse Bade of Paris. Erasmus had a very poor opinion of it; see for example *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 1017E. The early pages of *Antibarbari* record his strong feelings about *Catholicon*, *Mammotrectus*, and other grammars and dictionaries he despised. Yet the *Catholicon* was obviously found useful and was a valued possession of some clerics; we hear of copies left in wills in the first half of the sixteenth century (Peter Heath *The English Parish Clergy on the Eve of the Reformation* [London and Toronto 1969] 85). See Allen *Age of Erasmus* 43–50 and Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 199–201.
If Cousturier consulted *Catholicon* before writing his *Apologeticum in novos anticomaritas*, he would have found there a short article (fol 78 verso of the Mainz 1460 edition) on 'Antidicomaritae.' That might have been the source of his own erroneous title.
- 11 Probably intended for *Breviloquus* or *Breviloquium*. Medieval lexicons with such titles were ascribed to Johannes de Mera (Allen Ep 35:86n) and others including, very improbably, Erasmus' contemporary Reuchlin (*Epistolae obscurorum virorum* 6:68n). Whoever the compiler was, the disappearance of such works as the three named here was a heartening sign, wrote Erasmus in 1522, that sound learning does advance (*De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 370B–C / ASD I-2 285:11–14 / CWE 25 54–5).
- 12 In the Middle Ages the poetry of Ovid, particularly his *Metamorphoses*, was highly esteemed as moral and even religious and allegorical as well as narrative art. Nor is this surprising; all of Homer's and Virgil's poetry, Erasmus tells us, can be taken allegorically (*Enchiridion* LB V 7F / CWE 66 33) – a notion Rabelais scoffs at (*Gargantua and Pantagruel* book 1, prologue). *Ovide moralisé*, a long versified translation (fourteenth century) of the *Metamorphoses* with additions from other works, affords interesting examples. In each book the author comments on the allegories, identifying pagan persons and events in Ovid with biblical ones. Who this author was is disputed. Text ed C. de Boer (Amsterdam 1915–38; repr Wiesbaden 1966–7). Consult E.K. Rand *Ovid and His Influence* (Boston 1925) 134–7; L.K. Born 'Ovid and Allegory' *Speculum* 9 (1934) 362–79.
- 13 Cf Quintus Curtius 5.1.38; same phrase (*honus sit auribus*) in Cicero *Ad familiares* 9.22.4.
- 14 So stupid that they fed on human excrement (*Adagia* I x 95); hence a proverb appropriate to one who 'talks filthily among the filthy, ignorantly among the ignorant' (*Adagia* I x 96, and cf II x 3)
- 15 *resumptam*. 'Resumptive' is an obsolete medieval term for 'restorative' (*Oxford English Dictionary*). It occurs in a disparaging allusion of 1528 to Bédac, where it

- appears to mean an academic discourse (perhaps resumé) or ceremony (Allen Ep 2077:37–40). The ‘Pelini,’ then, must be Erasmus’ opponents at the Sorbonne. As the ASD editors point out, a Greek adjective transliterated *pelini* means ‘of clay’ or ‘of mud.’ The name may be used here to identify the Pelini with the pedants in Paris (see ‘The Seraphic Funeral’ n6), who were ‘muddled’ in more ways than one. See ‘The Profane Feast’ n99.
- 16 *bellaria aut tragemata*; the terms are borrowed from Gellius 13.11.6–7 (cf Macrobius 2.8.3).
 - 17 Both fatal. On hemlock, see ‘Sympathy’ 1044:17–18 and n87; on cabbage, *Adagia* I v 38.
 - 18 A gibe at Quercus (de Quercu), Guillaume Duchesne, an active opponent of Erasmus in proceedings of the Sorbonne. An earlier allusion to him occurs in ‘Patterns’ (n35). See Allen Ep 1188:29n and CEBR.
 - 19 *moretum*, a country dish of garlic, oil, and other ingredients; Ovid *Fasti* 4.367
 - 20 On custom see ‘The Profane Feast’ n58.
 - 21 Their usual dress. Cf Lucian *Cynicus* 1. This was one of the dialogues translated by More.
 - 22 In this context Paris, the abode of the Sorbonists
 - 23 Canthelus] ‘Bertulphus’ until the March 1533 edition
 - 24 See n3 above.
 - 25 Synaloepha is the reduction of two syllables to one, especially where a vowel at the end of one word is lost or merged with a vowel at the beginning of the following word. In this fantastic example two vowels eta and omicron are lost and only the alpha remains.
 - 26 to the point] Earlier editions have ‘better than he did,’ meaning Diphylus.
 - 27 By omission of *-di-* (meaning ‘apart,’ ‘asunder’)
 - 28 *Adagia* III vi 77
 - 29 Albinus’ informant (actually Levinus Ammonius; see Allen Ep 2016:45–64) invented a connection between *anticomarita* and *comaron*, the European arbutus or wild strawberry tree, which Pliny says is also called *unedo* (‘I eat one’), because nobody would want to eat more than one (*Naturalis historia* 15.98–9). It is hard to digest and injurious to the stomach (23.151); Athenaeus adds that it causes headaches (2.50e).
 - 30 ‘Cobbler’ is *sutor*, here alluding to Cousturier (Petrus Sutor).
 - 31 *petra* ‘rock’ is feminine. The masculine *Petrus* ‘Peter’ would refer, more appropriately, to Cousturier, who is both stubborn and hare-brained.
 - 32 *Adagia* I iii 7; a Terentian tag from *Phormio* 454
 - 33 *Adagia* I ii 15
 - 34 Athenians chose their magistrates by lot, using beans for this purpose; Lucian *Vitarum auctio* 6, and cf *Adagia* v i 36.
 - 35 Béda’s name is printed in capital letters in *Supputatio calumniarum Natalis Bedae* (1527) LB IX 518A to emphasize Erasmus’ scorn of his role in the Sorbonne’s censure (1526) of the *Colloquies* and other writings.
 - 36 *bonis avibus*; *Adagia* I i 75, common in Erasmus
 - 37 Béda, Duchesne, and Cousturier respectively
 - 38 Metaphysical jargon, familiar to university students and professors of philosophy. These terms had a place in speculations about the holy Triad; that is, the Trinity in Christian theology.

- 39 A town in ancient Etruria. 'As if they're off to Sutri' was a proverbial expression referring to going somewhere at someone else's bidding but paying your own expenses, or being invited to dinner but told to bring your own food (*Adagia* iv iv 52). Although the pertinence of 'Sutri' in this passage is a whispered secret, it must mean Paris, the home of these learned men.
- 40 *Adagia* I viii 86

A MARRIAGE IN NAME ONLY,
OR
THE UNEQUAL MATCH

Ἄγαμος γάμος, sive Coniugium impar

First printed in the *Colloquia* in the March 1529 edition. On the date see the introduction to 'Charon' 818–19.

The Greek title is recollected from Sophocles *Oedipus tyrannus* 1214 or Euripides *Helen* 690. An 'unequal marriage,' *coniugium impar*, is one in which there is disparity of class, health, religion, or some other serious impediment to harmony between husband and wife (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 875F). Erasmus argues with unmistakable earnestness that marriage, a forced marriage at that, between a healthy and a diseased person is outrageous in fact if not in law. The young bride, Iphigenia, is well named because she is deliberately 'sacrificed' by her parents in a grotesque marriage.

Many of Erasmus' colloquies, including some of the best ('Courtship' and 'Marriage') voice pungent, provocative opinions on topics relating to women and marriage. 'A Marriage in Name Only' is valuable both because of its connection with other colloquies and because of its frank comments on one of the social evils of the day. It expresses in dialogue, with considerable elaboration, what Erasmus had already written in his treatise *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (1526) LB V 667A–668D on the importance of sound health and compatibility in bride and groom and of wise parental guidance. All the major points and many of the minor ones made in this colloquy can be found in the earlier treatise, including the remark about victims of venereal disease taking pleasure in infecting other persons with it (852:7–9; cf LB V 667E). After reading Erasmus' unsparing denunciation of parents who allow a diseased man to marry their daughter (LB V 668B), we can appreciate better the passage in More's *Utopia* (1516) assuring us that in Utopia an affianced pair are shown to each other naked to prevent ignorance or deception about the health of the future spouse (Yale CWM 4 188, 189).

Whether syphilis had existed previously in Europe or arrived suddenly with Columbus' voyagers in 1493 is a disputed question. The certainty is that the disease spread rapidly and with devastating consequences. This colloquy by Erasmus is one of many comments, and a memorable one. His description of the pox, which is confirmed in distressing detail in many other texts, allows or compels us to compare its reported consequences with those of our

contemporary AIDS: the same sense of helplessness, horror, and incredulity; the same anxiety about who will be the next victim of this pestilence; the same hopes of finding a sure remedy or a cure; and, *mutatis mutandis*, comparable psychological, social, and political effects.

The situation described in this colloquy is a painful contrast with that of 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage,' where sensible parents try to dissuade their stubborn daughter from entering a convent. Here selfish parents are blind to reason, and their daughter, the bartered bride, passive or resigned to her cruel fate. But parents are usually selfish; that is only to be expected (Allen Ep 3104:34–42).

By 1529, when this dialogue appeared in the *Colloquia*, the prevalence and treatment of venereal disease had been discussed in many books and tracts. Girolamo Fracastoro's popular Latin poem *Syphilis* (Verona 1530) reprinted five times before 1600, gave the worst form of treponematosi its name, syphilis, after the shepherd who, because he had offended the sun-god, Apollo, was stricken with this malady. With regard to subject, therefore, Erasmus' colloquy was no novelty. Its interest lies rather in the author's outrage and dismay, his sympathy with the young bride, and his observations on the marriage bond. If he had an actual marriage in mind when he wrote the colloquy, we do not know whose or where it was; nor does this uncertainty make any difference to our response to the argument.

In his *De institutione feminae christianae* 2.4, Juan Luis Vives has an anecdote that illustrates the kind of situation described by Erasmus but teaches a different lesson. Vives names a woman of Bruges, Clara Valdaura (his mother-in-law), who had married a much older man and then discovered he had the pox. The point of the story is her perfect wifely devotion, for she nursed him for the rest of his life, though he lived for many years with the most loathsome disease (*Opera omnia* iv 196–8).

For references to early writings on syphilis see n12 below. Fracastoro's *Syphilis* has been edited and translated by H. Wynne-Finch (London 1935) and by Geoffrey Eatough (Liverpool 1984). On this poem and the theme in art see Erwin Panofsky in *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 12 (1961) 1–33, an essential article. Fracastoro, a physician, also published a treatise *De contagione et contagiosis morbis* in 1546 (trans Wilmer Cave Wright [New York and London 1930]). To the world of learning this was his most important work. H. Brabant *Médecins, malades, et maladies de la Renaissance* (Brussels 1966) surveys many aspects of medicine; chapter 1 deals with the pox. The same author's articles on epidemics and Erasmus' illnesses ('Epidémies et médecins au temps d'Erasmus,' 'Erasmus, ses maladies et ses médecins' in *Colloquia Erasmi Turonensis* 1 515–38, 539–68) are recommended.

PETRONIUS, GABRIEL

Petronius Where from, friend Gabriel, with such a dismal look? Not come out of Trophonius' cave, are you?¹

5 **Gabriel** Oh, no – from a marriage.

Petronius A less marriageable face I've never seen. Wedding guests generally look happier and merrier for six whole days afterwards; greybeards grow ten years younger. So what wedding are you talking about? That between Death and Destruction,² I suppose?

10 **Gabriel** No, between a young nobleman and a girl of sixteen in whom you'd find no lack of beauty, manners, family, or fortune – in short, fit to be the wife of Jove.

Petronius Huh! So young a girl for such an old fellow?³

Gabriel Kings don't age.⁴

15 **Petronius** Then why so glum? Maybe you're jealous of the groom who forestalled you and carried off the captured spoils?

Gabriel Pooh! Not at all.

Petronius It wasn't the sort of thing they say occurred at the feast of Lapiths?⁵

20 **Gabriel** By no means.

Petronius What? Did you run out of wine?

Gabriel On the contrary, there was more than enough.

Petronius No flute players on hand?

Gabriel Yes, fiddlers, harpers, flutists, and bagpipers.

25 **Petronius** What, then? Wasn't Hymen⁶ present?

Gabriel He was summoned in vain by ever so many voices.

Petronius Nor the Graces?⁷

Gabriel Not the slightest sign⁸ of one. Nor Juno, who presides over marriages; nor golden Aphrodite; nor Jove, the marriage-god.⁹

30 **Petronius** Really, you describe a wedding simply unlucky and without benefit of clergy;¹⁰ or rather a marriage without marriage.

Gabriel Had you seen it, you'd go further than that.

Petronius No dancing, then?

Gabriel No, it was a wretchedly lame affair.¹¹

35 **Petronius** So no favouring deity was there to gladden the nuptials?

Gabriel No divinity at all, save one goddess the Greeks call Pox.¹²

Petronius You tell of a scabby wedding, I think.

Gabriel An ulcerous and festering one, rather.

Petronius But why, my dear Gabriel, does this mention of it bring tears to
40 your eyes?

Gabriel Petronius, this affair could draw tears from flint.

Petronius I believe it could – if flint had seen it. But please do tell me, what is this awful misfortune? Don't conceal it and don't keep me in suspense any longer.

Gabriel You know Lempridius Eubulus?¹³

5 **Petronius** There's no man better – or better off – in this city.

Gabriel Well, you know his daughter, Iphigenia?¹⁴

Petronius You've named the flower of the age.

Gabriel So she is. But do you know whom she's married?

Petronius I'll know if you tell me.

10 **Gabriel** She's married Pompilius Blenus.¹⁵

Petronius What? Not that Thraso,¹⁶ who's in the habit of boring everyone to death with his boastful yarns?

Gabriel The very one.

Petronius But he's long been notorious in this city for two things: lies, and
15 the pox that doesn't yet have an exclusive name, since it goes by such a variety of them.¹⁷

Gabriel It's a most presumptuous pox. In a showdown, it wouldn't yield to leprosy, elephantiasis,¹⁸ ringworm, gout, or sycosis.¹⁹

Petronius So the medical tribe proclaim.

20 **Gabriel** Why should I now describe, Petronius, a girl already known to you? Though her attire added a great deal of charm to her natural beauty. My dear Petronius, you'd have said she was some goddess: altogether lovely. Meanwhile, enter our handsome groom: nose broken, one foot dragging after the other (but less gracefully than the Swiss fashion would be),²⁰ scurvy
25 hands, a breath that would knock you over, lifeless eyes, head bound up, bloody matter exuding from nose and ears. Other men have rings on their fingers; this one even wears rings on his thigh.

Petronius What possessed the parents to trust their daughter to such a monster?

30 **Gabriel** I don't know, except that a great many people seem to have lost their minds these days.

Petronius Perhaps he's very rich.

Gabriel He's rich, all right – in debts.

Petronius If the girl had poisoned her grandparents on both sides, what
35 worse punishment could have been inflicted on her?

Gabriel Had she defiled her ancestors' ashes,²¹ it would have been punishment enough to have to kiss such a monster.

Petronius I agree.

Gabriel To my way of thinking, this treatment is more cruel than flinging
40 her naked to bears or lions or crocodiles. Wild beasts would have spared one so beautiful, or a quick death would have ended her torment.

Petronius What you say is true. In my opinion, this deed is worthy of Mezentius, who (according to Virgil) tied dead bodies to living ones, fastening hands to hands and mouth to mouth.²² Though, unless I'm mistaken, not even Mezentius was so savage that he would yoke so lovely a girl to a corpse. And there's no corpse you wouldn't rather be bound to than such a stinking one, for his breath is sheer poison,²³ his speech a plague, his touch death.

Gabriel Just imagine, Petronius, what pleasure she'll take in his kisses, his embraces, his lovemaking and caresses.

Petronius I've sometimes heard theologians discussing marriage between unequals. Surely this could be called with perfect justice a marriage of unequals – as though you set a jewel in lead. But I marvel at the young woman's recklessness. Usually such girls are scared almost to death at the sight of a ghost²⁴ or a spectre. Will this one dare to embrace such a corpse at night?

Gabriel The girl has excuses: the authority of her parents, the entreaty of friends, and the innocence that goes with her age. For my part, I can't sufficiently marvel at the parents' madness. Who has a daughter so homely that he'd be willing to give her in marriage to a leper?

Petronius In my judgment, no one with the slightest tinge of sanity. If I had a one-eyed daughter who was lame in the bargain and as deformed as Homer's Thersites,²⁵ and dowerless to boot, I'd refuse a son-in-law of that sort.

Gabriel Yet this plague is both more hideous and more harmful than every kind of leprosy, for it progresses quickly, recurs over and over again, and often kills, while leprosy sometimes allows a man to live to a ripe old age.

Petronius Perhaps her parents were unaware of the groom's disease.

Gabriel Not at all; they knew about it perfectly well.

Petronius If they hated their daughter so, why didn't they tie her in a sack and throw her into the Scheldt?²⁶

Gabriel That would have been a milder form of insanity, to be sure.

Petronius What quality recommended the groom so highly to them? Does he excel in any profession?

Gabriel Many of them: he's an indefatigable gambler, an invincible boozier, a reprobate whoremonger, a past master of cheating and lying, a ready thief, a total bankrupt, an abandoned rake. Why elaborate? Universities teach only the seven liberal arts, but this fellow has more than ten illiberal ones.

Petronius Still, there must have been something to recommend him to her parents.

Gabriel Only his glorious title of knight.²⁷

Petronius What sort of knight is one whose pox scarcely allows him to sit in the saddle? But perhaps he owns splendid estates.



The syphilitic

An early illustration by Dürer (c 1496) of the effects of the 'new' disease
 The sphere above recalls an ominous conjunction of planets in Scorpio (1484),
 which some astrologers later regarded as prophetic of the Spanish invasion of Italy
 and the appearance of syphilis.

Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

Gabriel He did have middling ones, but thanks to his extravagance²⁸ nothing's left except one little tower, from which he sallies forth at regular intervals in search of prey, a tower so nobly furnished you wouldn't want to keep your hogs there. Yet all the while he prattles about castles, fiefs, and
 5 other fine-sounding names, and hangs up his coat of arms everywhere.

Petronius What insignia does his shield bear?

Gabriel Three golden elephants in a field of scarlet.

Petronius Elephant for the elephant – that's appropriate, surely.²⁹ Must be a bloodthirsty fellow.

10 **Gabriel** No, a wine-thirsty one, for he's wonderfully fond of red wine. That's your man of blood.

Petronius Then that snout of his would be useful for drinking.

Gabriel Indeed it would.

Petronius Thus his insignia proclaim a great and confirmed fool and wine-guzzler. For his colour isn't that of blood but of unmixed wine, and the golden
 15 elephant indicates that whatever gold he gets his hands on goes for wine.

Gabriel That's true.

Petronius What dowry will this Thraso³⁰ bring to his bride, then?

Gabriel What? A very great –

20 **Petronius** How could a bankrupt give a very great one?

Gabriel Give me a chance to tell you: a very great, I say, and very bad pox.

Petronius Damned if I wouldn't rather have my daughter married to a horse than to such a horseman!³¹

Gabriel But I'd rather have mine married to a monk. No, this isn't marrying
 25 a man but a man's corpse. If you had seen this sight – tell me, would you have held back the tears?

Petronius How could I when I can hardly hear about it without tears? Were her parents so lacking in all natural affection that they would hand over their only daughter, a girl so beautiful, so talented, with such winning manners,
 30 to be slave to such a monster simply on account of a lying shield?

Gabriel But this outrage – than which you could find nothing more barbarous, more cruel, more wicked – is even a laughing matter³² with the governing class nowadays, despite the fact that those born to rule ought to have as robust health as possible.³³ And in fact, the condition of the body
 35 has its effect on mental power. Undeniably this disease usually depletes whatever brains a man has. So it comes about that rulers of states may be men who are healthy neither in body nor in mind.

Petronius Men who preside over affairs of state need not only sound minds and robust health but superior bearing and dignified presence as well.

40 Though the first excellence of princes is wisdom and honour, nevertheless a ruler's physical appearance does make a difference.³⁴ If he's wild-looking,

his ugliness draws much ill will to him; but if he's honourable and dutiful, 'More pleasing valour when with beauty joined.'³⁵

Gabriel Rightly so.

Petronius Don't people pity the wretchedness of women whose husbands
5 develop leprosy or epilepsy after marriage?

Gabriel Yes, and they should.

Petronius Then what madness it is willingly to hand over a daughter to one who's worse than leprous!

Gabriel More than madness. If a lord undertook to breed dogs, would he
10 couple a scabby, spiritless dog with a full-blooded bitch?

Petronius No, he'd be very careful to match her with one purebred in every respect, so the litter wouldn't be mongrels.

Gabriel And if a general wanted to strengthen his cavalry, he wouldn't couple a diseased or broken-down horse with a prize mare, would he?

15 **Petronius** He wouldn't even admit a diseased horse into a common stable, lest infection spread to the other horses.

Gabriel But they think it doesn't matter whom they couple with a daughter and from what sort of stock come the children who will not only inherit all the wealth but even govern the commonwealth.

20 **Petronius** A farmer wouldn't mate just any bull and heifer, or just any horse and mare, or just any hog and sow, since bullock is bred for plow, horse for carriage, and pig for kitchen.

Gabriel Note how consistent men's judgments are: if some commoner dares to kiss a girl of noble birth, people think this insult must be avenged by war.

25 **Petronius** A most ferocious war, too.

Gabriel And yet these very people, having free choice, well aware of what they're doing, experienced in the ways of the world, give away their dearest possession to a repulsive monster. As private individuals, they're disloyal to their family; as citizens, to the state.

30 **Petronius** If a bridegroom otherwise normal has a slight limp, how the marriage is dreaded! Whereas this terrible evil is no impediment to betrothals.

Gabriel If someone has farmed out his daughter to a Franciscan,³⁶ how great the horror, how loud the lamentation over the maiden foully placed!
35 Yet remove the habit and she has a man of sound physique. But this bride passes her whole life with a corpse that is only half alive. If a girl marries a priest, people joke about an 'anoined' man, but this girl married a man who's worse than smeared with ointment.

Petronius Enemies scarcely do this to girls captured in war, pirates to those
40 they kidnap; and yet parents do it to an only daughter, and a magistrate doesn't put them under a guardian?



Monk and maiden
Leonhard Beck, 1523

Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin

A contemporary illustration of an allusion in 'A Marriage in Name Only' to renting or selling a daughter to a friar. Here a confident monk offers a large coin to the blustering father, who, although he has sword in hand, is obviously about to take the money. His daughter's eyes are on the monk. The mother utters sorrowful words, but her smirking countenance betrays her acceptance of the situation. An older monk (left) regrets this barter but says he is powerless to intervene. Everyone present understands that the daughter will go with the monk.

Gabriel How will a physician cure a lunatic if he himself is mad?

Petronius But it's amazing that princes, whose duty it is to look out for the commonwealth, at least in matters pertaining to the person – and in this regard nothing is more important than sound health – don't devise some
5 remedy for this situation.³⁷ So huge a plague has filled a large part of the globe – and yet they go on snoring as if it made no difference at all.

Gabriel One must speak guardedly of princes, Petronius. But bend your ear; I'll whisper a few words into it.

Petronius Alas! If only you were mistaken in what you say!

10 **Gabriel** How many types of disease do you suppose are caused by wine spoiled and decayed in a thousand ways?³⁸

Petronius Countless ones, if you believe the doctors.

Gabriel Aren't inspectors on the watch for this?

Petronius Certainly they're on the watch – to collect excise taxes.

15 **Gabriel** The girl who knowingly marries a diseased man perhaps deserves the trouble she's brought upon herself, though if I were head of the government I'd run them both out of town. But if she married this baneful pest when he misrepresented himself as sound – if I were pope I'd annul this marriage even if it had been made with a thousand marriage contracts.³⁹

20 **Petronius** On what pretext,⁴⁰ since a marriage lawfully contracted cannot be annulled by mortal man?⁴¹

Gabriel What? Do you think one made by a wicked fraud is contracted lawfully? The contract isn't valid if the girl is deceived into marrying a slave she thought a free man. Here the husband is slave to a loathsome mistress,
25 Pox, and this slavery is the more wretched because she sets none free; no hope of release can mitigate the misery of the bondage.⁴²

Petronius You've discovered a pretext, clearly.

Gabriel Besides, marriage exists only between the living. Here the girl is married to a dead man.⁴³

30 **Petronius** That's another pretext. But I suppose you'd permit scabby to marry scabby, in accordance with the old saw, 'like to like.'⁴⁴

Gabriel Were I permitted to do what would benefit the commonwealth, I'd let them marry, all right – but once they were married I'd burn them.

Petronius Then you'd be acting the part of a Phalaris,⁴⁵ not a prince.

35 **Gabriel** Does the physician who amputates some fingers or cauterizes a part of the body, lest the whole body perish, seem a Phalaris to you? I regard it as mercy, not cruelty. Would it had been done when this mischief first began to appear! Then the welfare of the whole earth would have been promoted by the destruction of a few. And we find a precedent for this in French
40 history.⁴⁶

Petronius But it would have been more merciful to castrate or deport them.

Gabriel What would you do with the women, then?

Petronius Put chastity belts on them.

Gabriel That would protect you against getting bad eggs from bad hens.⁴⁷

But I'll admit this is the more merciful method if you'll admit the other is
 5 safer. For even eunuchs experience lust. Besides, the disease is transmitted
 not by one means alone but spread to other persons by a kiss, by conversation,
 by touch, by having a little drink together.⁴⁸ And we observe that this disease
 is accompanied by a mortal hatred, so that whoever is in its clutches takes
 pleasure in infecting as many others as possible,⁴⁹ even though doing so is
 10 no help to him. If deported, they may possibly escape; they can fool others
 at night or take advantage of persons who don't know them. From the dead
 there's no danger, surely.

Petronius It's safer, I grant, but I don't know whether it suits Christian
 compassion.

15 **Gabriel** Come, tell me: which are the worse menace, mere thieves or these
 creatures?

Petronius Money's much cheaper than good health, I admit.

Gabriel And yet we Christians crucify thieves, and that isn't called cruelty
 but justice. And it's a duty, if you consider the public welfare.

20 **Petronius** In that instance, however, the penalty is paid by the one who
 committed the crime.

Gabriel *These fellows confer a favour, of course! But let's grant that many
 people get this disease through no fault of their own (though all the same
 you'd find few victims who hadn't invited it by their own misconduct).*

25 Jurists hold that there are times when it is right for innocent persons to
 be put to death if this is essential to the public safety, just as the Greeks
 slew Astyanax, son of Hector, after the destruction of Troy lest the war be
 renewed through his efforts.⁵⁰ And it is not thought wrong, after a tyrant is
 killed, to butcher his innocent children also.⁵¹ What about the fact that we
 30 Christians are constantly at war despite our realization that most of the evils
 in war befall those who haven't deserved to suffer? The same thing occurs in
 what are called 'reprisals': the one who did the injury is safe, and the trader,
 who so far from being responsible for the deed never even heard of it, is
 robbed.⁵² Now if we use such remedies in cases of minor importance, what
 35 do you think should be done in the cruelest case of all?

Petronius I yield. It's true.

Gabriel Then consider this. In Italy, buildings are locked up at the first
 sign of pestilence; those who attend the sufferer are quarantined. Some call
 this inhumanity, though actually it's the highest humanity, for because of
 40 this precaution the plague is checked with few fatalities. How great the

humanity of protecting the lives of so many thousands! Some people accuse the Italians of inhospitality because, if pestilence is reported, they banish a stranger at evening and make him spend the night in the open air; but it is morally right to inconvenience a few for the sake of the public good.⁵³ Some

5 fancy themselves very brave and dutiful because they dare to visit a sufferer from pestilence even if they haven't any business there. But when, on their return, they infect wives, children, and the entire family, what is more foolish than that 'courage,' what more undutiful than that 'duty' of greeting somebody else to bring your nearest and dearest into imminent danger of
10 their lives? Yet how much less is the peril from plague than from this pox! Rarely does the plague affect close relatives; as a rule it spares the aged; and those it does attack it either releases quickly or restores to health stronger than ever. *This* disease is simply slow but sure death, or rather burial. Victims are wrapped like corpses in cloths and unguents.⁵⁴

15 **Petronius** Very true. At least so deadly a disease as this should have been treated with the same care as leprosy.⁵⁵ But if this is too much to ask, no one should let his beard be cut, or he should be his own barber.⁵⁶

Gabriel What if everyone kept his mouth shut?

Petronius They'd spread the disease through the nose.

20 **Gabriel** There's a remedy for that trouble, too.

Petronius What?

Gabriel Let them imitate the alchemists: wear a mask that admits light through little glass windows and allows you to breathe through mouth and nose by means of a tube extending from the mask over your shoulders and
25 down your back.⁵⁷

Petronius Fine, if there were nothing to fear from contact with fingers, sheets, combs, and scissors.

Gabriel Then it would be best to let your beard grow to your knees.

Petronius Evidently. In the next place, make a law that the same men may
30 not be both barber and surgeon.

Gabriel You'd reduce the barbers to starvation.

Petronius Let them cut costs and raise prices a little.

Gabriel Passed.

Petronius Then make a law to prohibit the common drinking cup.

35 **Gabriel** England would hardly stand for that!⁵⁸

Petronius And don't let two share the same bed unless they're husband and wife.

Gabriel Accepted.

Petronius Furthermore, don't permit a guest at an inn to sleep in sheets
40 anyone else has slept in.⁵⁹

Gabriel What will you do with the Germans, who wash theirs barely twice a year?

Petronius Let them get after the washerwomen. Moreover, abolish the custom, no matter how ancient, of greeting with a kiss.

5 **Gabriel** Not even in church?⁶⁰

Petronius Let everyone put his hand against the board.⁶¹

Gabriel What about conversation?

Petronius Avoid the Homeric advice to 'bend the head near,'⁶² and let the listener in turn close his lips tight.

10 **Gabriel** The Twelve Tables⁶³ would scarcely suffice for these laws.

Petronius But meanwhile what advice have you for the unhappy girl?

Gabriel Only that by being cheerful in her misery, she lessen her misery by that much; that she cover her mouth with her hand when her husband kisses her; and sleep with him armed.

15 **Petronius** Where do you hurry off to now?

Gabriel Straight to my study.

Petronius To do what?

Gabriel To compose an epitaph instead of the wedding song they ask for!

NOTES

- 1 The opening lines of 'The Funeral' are very similar. On 'Trophonius' cave see *Adagia* I vii 77 and 'The Funeral' n2.
- 2 The alliteration is in the Latin: *mortis . . . cum Marte*.
- 3 'Old fellow' seems a jocular reference to 'Jove' in the preceding line. A man as notorious as this groom, Pompilius Blenus, must be older than the bride of sixteen. A man of the world, he is 'old in sin,' seeming prematurely aged because of his debauchery and his disease, like the soldier in 'The Soldier and the Carthusian.'
- 4 Not in *Adagia* or Tilley; perhaps a variant of the legal maxim 'the king never dies.' Webster in *The White Devil* has 'The Gods never wax old, no more doe princes' (4.2.39).
- 5 See 'The Godly Feast' n310.
- 6 God of weddings
- 7 For a happy marriage attended by the Graces, Muses, and the heavenly Venus see 'The Epithalamium.'
- 8 Proverbial; *Adagia* II i 84
- 9 Cf 'The Epithalamium' 524:22-5. The marriage-god is Jupiter Gamelius, as in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 619B. 'Having care of marriages' was one of his titles. The word, transliterated from Greek, occurs in Jerome *Adversus Jovinianum* 1.48.
- 10 Literally 'godless'; Greek in the original

- 11 Both literally and figuratively. Syphilis is crippling; cf 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 334:36–335:2.
- 12 Psora, scabies. 'Pox' was a catch-all term for syphilis, leprosy, scabies, mange, and other maladies causing painful or repulsive disfiguration. See 845:17–19 below.

On the origins of venereal syphilis see Francisco Guerra, 'The Problem of Syphilis' in *First Images of America* ed Fredi Chiapelli, 2 vols (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1976) II 845–51. This new and horrible affliction first came to public attention as a consequence of the French invasion of Italy in 1494–5, particularly of the French occupation of Naples in February–May 1495. It quickly began to receive comment from medical men, then from others. See *The Earliest Printed Literature on Syphilis, Being Ten Tractates from the Years 1495–1498*, facsimile texts ed Karl Sudhoff and Charles Singer (Florence 1925). These texts were printed in Italy and Germany.

Niccolò Leonicensi's *Libellus de epidemia* (Venice 1497) a iii says Italians called the new malady the French disease; the French called it the Neapolitan disease (Sudhoff and Singer 123); and it was often known, as we read in Erasmus, as the Spanish disease. It became a familiar topic in writings by laymen as well as physicians; for instance by Ulrich von Hutten, who wrote from firsthand experience with it in his treatise *De morbo Gallico* (1519; text in Hutten *Opera* v 399–497). When Hutten was in Basel in December 1522 Erasmus excused himself from receiving 'this swashbuckler . . . pox and all' in his house (Allen Epp 1496:6–11, 1331:57–8 and note / CWE Epp 1496:8–14, 1331:63 and n24). Hutten died of syphilis in August 1523. Allusions to the pox are commonplace, in England as on the Continent, in the first half of the century. Colet exhorts men to 'Call to remembrance the meruailous and horryble punysshment of the abhominable great pockes, dayly apperynge to our sightes' (*A right fruitfull monicion*, reprinted in Lupton *Life of Colet* 307 Appendix D from the rare edition of 1534; date of composition unknown). Fisher, in a sermon printed in 1509, paints a dark picture of men 'vexed with the frensshe pockes, poore, and nedy, lyenge by the hye wayes styntyng and almoost roten above the ground, havyinge intollerable ache in theyr bones' (*English Works* ed J.E.B. Mayor, EETS extra series 27 [London 1876; repr 1975] 240). One of the allegations against Cardinal Wolsey, Tyndale writes, was that he 'breathed . . . in the king's face, when he [Wolsey] had the French pox' (*Practice of Prelates* [1530; STC 24465] k2 verso; in *Works* II [PS 43] 335). But the sexual origin of syphilis, though suspected, was not understood at first.

- 13 'Good counsellor,' the name of reasonable and respectable men in 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' and 'The Poetic Feast' but wholly inappropriate for this bride's father, who is blind to his daughter's welfare.
- 14 In Greek mythology the daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. Told by the seer Calchas that the goddess Artemis demanded the sacrifice of their daughter, Agamemnon prepared to carry out the sentence, but Artemis relented at the last moment and saved Iphigenia by spiriting her away and substituting a hind in her place. This is the version presented in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulide*. Erasmus translated this play in 1506.
- 15 A fictional character so far as we know. The name suggests *blennus* 'blockhead,' 'dolt' as in Plautus *Bacchides* 1086. French *blennorrhagie* means 'gonorrhoea.'

As Smith emphasized (*Key* 47–8), the language about him in these pages would be applicable to two of Erasmus' former friends and later enemies, Heinrich Eppendorf and Ulrich von Hutten. Erasmus had many difficulties with Eppendorf; see 'The Cheating Horse-Dealer' and 'The Knight without a Horse,' which mocks Eppendorf's pretensions to knightly rank. Hutten, a far better known person, was an assertive patriot, a Lutheran, and an important writer who came to a bad end (see n12 above). Eppendorf and Hutten were acquainted in Basel for a few years in the early 1520s. When Erasmus and Hutten fell out, Erasmus accused Eppendorf of inciting Hutten to write against him (Epp 1383, 1437). Erasmus' relations with Eppendorf went from bad to worse, even after this March 1529 colloquy was printed, and continued to trouble him for several years longer. On Eppendorf and Hutten see CEBR and notes to 'The Knight without a Horse.'

On Hutten and Erasmus the fullest account is W. Kaegi 'Hutten und Erasmus: Ihre Freundschaft und ihr Streit' *Historische Vierteljahrsschrift* 22 (1924–5) 200–78, 461–514. For Erasmus' *Spongia* (1523), a reply to Hutten's *Expostulatio* against him, see LB X 1631A–1672F; English translations of *Expostulatio* and *Spongia* in Randolph J. Klawiter *The Polemics of Erasmus of Rotterdam and Ulrich von Hutten* (Notre Dame, Ind 1977).

- 16 The braggart soldier in Terence *Eunuchus*
- 17 See n12 above; cf Allen Ep 1593:88–9; *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 667A.
- 18 In August 1525 Erasmus refers to an incursion of this skin disease into Italy. He does not give a date but says that the epidemic soon disappeared (Allen Ep 1593:75–6). Possibly he knew of it when he lived in Italy in 1506–9.
- 19 *Sycosis barbae*, chronic folliculitis
- 20 See 'Military Affairs' n3.
- 21 *Adagia* II viii 23. See 'Penny-Pinching' n43.
- 22 The allusion to the cruel tyrant Mezentius' practice is in Virgil *Aeneid* 8.485–6. This striking image of uniting the living to the dead became fairly common in discussions of syphilitics who married (as in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 667C). An excellent example is Alciato's *Emblemata* no 198: *Nupta contagioso* (Padua 1621; repr New York 1976); Fracastoro (introduction 843 above) tells those who have or fear the pox, 'Shun Venus' (*Syphilis* 2.113).
- 23 See 853:18–25 below and *Ecclesiastes* LB v 773C.
- 24 ghost] 'Mouse' (*muris*) in the first and second editions; changed (*lemuris*) in the edition of September 1531
- 25 See *Adagia* IV iii 80 and 'Courtship' n37
- 26 Said to have been a punishment for Roman parricides. 'Worthy of the sack' was proverbial; *Adagia* IV ix 18. The Scheldt flows past Antwerp, and Erasmus may have known or heard of a marriage there resembling the one he describes here.
- 27 'O the madness of parents who think it better for a daughter to marry a knight than a good farmer or skilled craftsman!' (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 668F).
- 28 *protervia*, a word used proverbially in describing a sacrifice in which everything offered must be consumed; hence reckless waste. Explained in *Adagia* I ix 44, where Erasmus uses it as a text for denouncing the vices of German Junkers, which he does more elaborately in 'The Knight without a Horse.' This adage was an addition to the 1528 edition (Phillips 'Adages' 129–30), and there is no

- doubt that Erasmus had Eppendorf in mind, as Smith (*Erasmus: A Study of His Life, Ideals and Place in History*. [New York and London 1923; repr New York 1962] 386) was the first to notice.
- 29 *Adagia* II ix 90: 'There's no difference between you and an elephant' alludes to being 'thick-skinned'; in this context that means thickheaded and stupid as well. Equally pertinent is a remark in *Adagia* I ix 44 about German knights who 'get a shield painted on which is a hand brandishing a sword and cutting up an elephant.'
 - 30 See n16 above.
 - 31 *equo* . . . *equiti* (here 'knight')
 - 32 See *De bello Turcico* LB V 346C; cf Allen Ep 2260:51-2.
 - 33 In the opening lines of *Institutio principis christiani* Erasmus merely says of a young prince that 'some thought should also perhaps be given to his state of health' (LB IV 561B / ASD IV-1 136:12-13 / Born 139 / CWE 27 206).
 - 34 Virgil *Aeneid* 5.344. See *Oratio de virtute amplectenda* (1503) LB V 67D-524A / CWE 29 5-6. Very similar is a passage in *Panegyricus ad Philippum* (1504) LB IV 523E-524A / CWE 27 33-4.
 - 35 Virgil *Aeneid* 5:344
 - 36 See illustration 850.
 - 37 In antiquity physicians accepted this duty, but today kings ignore it (*Encomium medicinae* LB I 542F-543A / ASD I-4 182:330-41 / CWE 29 46-7). Cf *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 667D-E.
 - 38 Cf *Encomium medicinae* LB I 543A / ASD I-4 182:327-42 / CWE 29 47.
 - 39 Literally, 'six hundred,' see 'The Funeral' n76.
 - 40 *color*, a rhetorical term; see 'A Fish Diet' n308.
 - 41 The essence of marriage was *consensus*, consent between the parties; see 'Courtship' n48. Divorce was impossible; see 'Marriage' n16.
 - 42 If the man had the pox and concealed this fact from his fiancée and her parents at the time of betrothal or marriage, then, in Erasmus' opinion, the engagement ought to be cancelled or the marriage annulled (*Ratio verae theologiae* in Holborn 207:27-36; *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 649A-B, 667A-668D).
 - 43 See 846:1-7 above, and cf 853:13-14 below.
 - 44 Greek in the original; cf *Adagia* I ii 20, I ii 21, and I i 35. Cf also *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 658D-E, 660A.
 - 45 Tyrant of Agrigentum in Sicily, sixth century BC. When one of his subjects devised a brazen bull in which to roast the tyrant's victims, Phalaris chose him as the first (Lucian *Phalaris* i). See *Adagia* I x 86 and *Parabolae* CWE 23 228:30.
 - 46 Possibly an allusion to drastic steps taken during a plague, but identification has eluded all editors.
 - 47 The English form of a proverb (cf Tilley B376) that in *Adagia* has 'crows' instead of 'hens' (I ix 25)
 - 48 Erasmus is sure that syphilis is contagious ('transmitted by a kiss') and spread by unhygienic practices, yet at the same time emphasizes sexual promiscuity as a cause. But because the sexual origins of venereal disease were not sufficiently or generally understood, and no clear distinction between acquired and congenital syphilis was known, the disease could be regarded as a misfortune rather than a consequence of personal behaviour – or misbehaviour. Erasmus however blames personal irresponsibility or carelessness more than bad luck

for the persistence of the pox. See 'The Epicurean' 1080:23–1081:12 on the 'stimulus of unlawful pleasure.'

- 49 So *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 667E
- 50 He was hurled from the walls of Troy by the victorious Greeks. See Euripides *Troades* 719–89. In Seneca *Troades* 1068–1103 he jumps from the walls.
- 51 In Lucian's *Tyrannicida* the tyrannicide kills the tyrant's son when he fails to find the tyrant. When, later, the tyrant discovers his son's body he commits suicide.
- 52 *represalibus*, medieval Latin; permission or right to do unto others as they have done unto you, specifically the right to regain seized or stolen property by seizing or stealing the property of others
- 53 Erasmus' residence in Italy in 1506–9 gave him unpleasant firsthand experience of reactions to pestilence there, as he relates in Epp 296:175–89, 447:470–96 / cWE Epp 296:185–200, 447:514–45. Coryat, a century later, says that cities in eastern Lombardy forbade strangers to enter unless they had a clean bill of health from the last city visited (*Crudities* 1 214). In the sixteenth century hospitals for incurables, including syphilitics, were established in Italy by societies, partly lay, partly clerical. See H.O. Evenett *The Spirit of the Counter-Reformation* (Cambridge 1968) 26–7.
- 54 In H. Brabant *Médecins, malades, et maladies de la Renaissance* (introduction 843 above) figure 2 shows a syphilitic wearing a sort of bib, required by the effects of treatment with mercury, which was commonly administered to victims of the disease. Cf Fracastoro *Syphilis* (843 above) 2.445–8. The other supposed cure, praised by Fracastoro, was gum guaiacum, *lignum vitae*.
- 55 Erasmus was no pioneer in epidemiology, but as a careful observer with long experience he made shrewd inferences about infectious and contagious diseases in these lines and elsewhere; see for example 'Inns' 372:16–32, where the guests are described as laughing about such dangers. Men of the world joke about the pox; he who does not have it is considered a mere yokel (Allen Ep 2260:51–2; *De bello Turcico* LB v 346C–D; 'The Knight without a Horse' 884:22–5). The contagiousness of the pox and the severity of its effects caused enlightened men to protest, as Erasmus does here and in other places, against customs that spread the disease. Thus Gilbert Cousin (on whom see introduction to 'The Master's Bidding' 64–5) in *Οἰκέρης sive de officiis famulorum* condemns masters who foolishly ignore a servant's loose living until he brings the pox into the household (Chaloner's translation [1543] B5–6). Erasmus insisted that any servant of his be above suspicion in this matter (Allen Ep 2963:3–8).
- 56 See the illustration (1520) of the barber-surgeon in *Colloquia Erasimiana Turonensia* 1 521.
- 57 An early writer on syphilis, Hans Widmann, advises men to avoid the breath of those who have *morbus Gallicus* (*De pustulis et morbo* [1497]; see Sudhoff and Singer [n12 above] 238). This had long been advice with respect to leprosy.
- 58 *A Relation of England* 219 makes the same observation. Erasmus noticed the custom in England (Allen and cWE Ep 999:67–8, and cf 'The Lover of Glory' 970:36–7), but in one of the later editions of *Adagia* says that 'with us it is now less common because of fear of the new pox' (iv vii 70). Montaigne confesses to fastidiousness in avoiding a common drinking cup (*Essays* 3.13

- 'Of Experience'; Frame 831). In Ep 1532 Erasmus suggests ways of improving hygienic arrangements in English houses.
- 59 In 'Inns' 375:22 Erasmus' traveller complains of dirty sheets; so did Montaigne (*Travel Journal*; Frame 879). For more favourable reports on German inns see 'Inns' n8.
- 60 'In England men kiss women by way of greeting, even in church' ('The Lover of Glory' 970:34–5). See 'Inns' n7; Allen Ep 103:17–24 / cwe Ep 103:19–29.
- 61 That is, instead of kissing it. The board (*tabellum*) is the pax-board, a small tablet or disc kissed by the celebrant at mass and then by each worshipper in turn. Some pax-boards were made of ivory or silver; which is why Bardolph in Shakespeare's *Henry v* stole one (3.6.42–7).
- 62 *Odyssey* 1.157, 4.70, 17.592. Erasmus quotes the Greek.
- 63 See 'A Fish Diet' n141.

THE IMPOSTURE

Impostura

First printed in the *Colloquia* in the March 1529 edition. On the date see introduction to 'Charon' 818–19.

Like 'Echo' and 'Non-Sequiturs,' this is a Lucianic *jeu d'esprit*. In the Greek writer's *Pseudosophista* (cleverly translated by H.W. and F.G. Fowler *The Works of Lucian of Samosata* [Oxford 1905] iv 181–90), a man who prides himself on the correctness of his grammar and idiom fails to detect the intentional blunders made by a friend, though challenged to do so. The comparable trick in *Impostura* of disguising verse as prose is one that Erasmus says he himself had played on an English friend, the eminent scholar Thomas Linacre (not More, as Smith *Key* 48 has; see *De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 347F / ASD I-2 217:20–218:7 / CWE 25 16). Cf Allen Ep 2241:21–2.

Ingenious exercises of this kind, however frivolous or pedantic they may seem, appealed strongly to sixteenth-century readers and writers, whose schooling was predominantly linguistic and rhetorical. Examples of verbal preciousness, metrical experimentation, and elaborate *schemata* occur so often in Renaissance literature, both Latin and vernacular, that we are constantly reminded of the degree to which appreciation depended on a good ear, not merely visual attentiveness. In 'The Imposture' Philip's self-confidence is the more culpable because he ought to have *heard* the scansion of the verses. For silent reading, a practice gradually made universal by printing, was not yet so completely 'natural' in Erasmus' time, or even in Shakespeare's, that people had ceased to 'hear' the words of a text even when reading them.

The speakers in this dialogue were most likely named after Lieven Algoet and Philippus Montanus, two of Erasmus' servant-pupils and messengers; on both see CEBR. Algoet, a native of Ghent, lived with Erasmus for six or seven years c 1519–25 and was in touch with him for half a dozen more. He appears in several colloquies; see 'Patterns' n33. Montanus was in Erasmus' service briefly in 1528. Afterwards, as a Parisian scholar, he edited patristic texts and became finally rector of a college in Douai. Erasmus left him 150 gold crowns in his final will (Allen xi 364:17–18 Appendix 25). See Allen Ep 2065 introduction. Montanus was first identified with the Philip of this colloquy by Smith (*Key* 48).

Philip How do you do, Livinus.

Livinus I'll do well enough, if you please.

Philip An enemy who announces his intentions isn't much to be feared. But come on; trick me if you can.

Philip I suppose I'm dealing with a magician, for I don't perceive any deception.

Livinus [3] Watch again, be on guard; you've been fooled here by me
More than once; now I mean further tricks to display.

15 **Philip** I'm ready; begin.

Livinus [4] What you've asked of me I've performed already.

Philip What's been done, or what performed? I don't see any trick.

Livinus [5] Lend me your ears; often I've warned; still you don't heed; try
now again.

20 **Philip** A new kind of magic! I'm fooled, you say, yet I'm not aware of any trick, though I've watched your eyes and hands and tongue. But come on, start again.

Livinus [6] Now again and again I've begun with my trick,
And as soon as I do you fall in to the trap.

25 **Philip** By what means do you trap me?

Livinus [7] This my tongue plays tricks that you hear not, see not;
Once more harken; try now to open ears and
Pay strict heed; then see if you're clever this time.

Philip I can't open them any more than I've done already, even if my life
30 depended on it. But trick me again.

Livinus [8] Once more are you fooled yet you don't see how skill can fool you.

Philip You're killing me! Tell me, I beg you, what sort of illusion is this?

Livinus [9] All this while in verse I've spoken and in verse I'm speaking still.

35 **Philip** Nothing further from my thoughts than that!

Livinus First I answered you in two iambic trimeters [1]. Next in a trochaic tetrameter catalectic [2]. Presently I spoke in straight cretics [3]. After that in Phalaecean² hendecasyllable [4]. Next wholly in choriambics [5]. In addition to this, wholly in anapaests [6]. Again, in three sapphics [7]. Then in Sotadean³ verse [8]. Last of all, in trochaic tetrameter [9].

Philip [10] Immortal God! I never dreamt I'd fall for tricks of that sort.
If I live long enough, I shall pay you back some day.

Livinus Go ahead if you can.

Philip [11] Here I go, paid you twice, tit for tat;⁴ yet you don't see the trick.

5 **Livinus** What! So soon?

Philip I threatened you in an iambic tetrameter catalectic [10] followed by five cretics [11].

Livinus So it turns out, I see, according to the proverb, 'Cretan meets Cretan.'⁵

10 **Philip** Yes, but I hope no more harmful deception may ever befall either of us!

NOTES

1 Similarly in 'The Liar and the Man of Honour' a trickster warns an acquaintance that he is going to lie to him without being detected, and does so.

2 After Phalaecus, an early Greek poet

3 The Greek poet Sotades (third century BC) is believed to have invented this metre: hendecasyllable with an anapaest inserted in the second foot.

4 *par pari*; *Adagia* I i 35

5 When the tables are turned on a cheater; *Adagia* I ii 26 and 29. See 'The Cheating Horse-Dealer' n8.

CYCLOPS, OR THE GOSPEL-BEARER

Cyclops, sive Evangeliphorus

'Cyclops' was one of nine new colloquies in the March 1529 edition. But another colloquy in that edition, 'Charon,' had already appeared in 1523; on that circumstance see the introduction to 'Charon,' 818–19 above. It was his study of 'Cyclops' that prompted Henry de Vocht to examine and reject the assertions in BE 2nd series *Colloquia* 1 199 concerning the presence of this dialogue and eight others in an edition brought out by Eucharius Cervicornus of Cologne in 1528. De Vocht showed by bibliographical evidence that these nine colloquies were later insertions, an *auctarium*, in the Cologne edition, where they lack signatures. They were first printed in the Froben edition of March 1529.

In addition to convincing bibliographical objections, there are serious biographical obstacles to the supposition that 'Cyclops' was first printed by Cervicornus in 1528. First, although it is certain that Polyphemus is Felix Rex, there is no proof that he was in Erasmus' service earlier than October of that year (Allen Epp 2068:1, 2121:4n, 2130 introduction). Second, a quarrel between Polyphemus and Ludovicus Carinus, mentioned in Allen Ep 2112:30–43 (March 1529), occurred in February 1529 (on Carinus see 'The Poetic Feast' n1). Third, for the allusion in this colloquy to preachers warning of the end of the world (869:32–3), taken as a reference to an Anabaptist's recent visit to Basel – and this seems the only plausible interpretation – no date earlier than 1529 is possible, since Erasmus' account of the incident as a recent event was written in April of that year (Allen Ep 2149:4–50). See De Vocht *Earliest English Translations* xi–xii, with the notes.

The interlocutors are two of Erasmus' *famuli* who served him as amanuenses and messengers. Both, he says, had expressed a desire to appear in the *Colloquies* (Allen Ep 2147:11–20). Whether they were pleased with his presentation of them we do not know. Nicolaas Kan (Cannius) of Amsterdam was a member of Erasmus' household from the spring of 1527 until July of 1530, when he returned to Holland and entered the church; when this colloquy came out he was twenty-four years old. Polyphemus is Felix Rex of Ghent, who was in Erasmus' service for about a year, 1528–9. His nickname of 'Polÿphemus' ('many-voiced') may have testified to his knowledge of languages, or his chattering, but also recalls the boorish Cyclops of the *Odyssey*. Erasmus had his troubles with Polyphemus, a reckless, quarrelsome fellow and given to drink. He drifted about for a few years after Erasmus got rid of him and finally became librarian to Duke Albert of Prussia in 1534. He died c 1549.

According to Erasmus, Polyphemus 'used to carry with him a beautifully decorated volume of the Gospels, though nothing could be more soiled than his own life' (Allen Ep 2147:18–20). In the colloquy Polyphemus – who talked of enlisting against the Turks when he left Erasmus' service (Allen Ep 2230:1–4) – already has a share of the swaggering insolence and impiety found in soldiers portrayed in Erasmus' writings, Thrasymachus in 'Military Affairs,' for instance. Few encounters between ignorance and effrontery are more amusing than that in which Polyphemus 'absolves' a friar by whacking him on the head with Erasmus' translation of the New Testament.

Another passage in this dialogue was thought by some to be a libel on a leading citizen of Basel, Johannes Oecolampadius. Erasmus was troubled by the report and changed the offending words in the next edition. This tempest in a teapot injured no one but is of some interest as a sign of tensions in Basel at a time when controversies over the Reformation were coming to a climax there and Erasmus, as a consequence, was preparing to move to Freiburg.

Nicolas Mercier, who produced an expurgated edition of the *Colloquies* (Paris 1656), says in his dedication that Kan had once been engaged in a similar labour but his work 'perished long ago' (a2 verso in the Paris 1673/4 edition). The source of this assertion is unknown. See Franz Bierlaire *Les Colloques d'Erasmus* 144 n6.

German and Italian versions of *Cyclops* (1545) are reported, and an English version by Edmund Becke was issued at Canterbury c 1549. The volume contained also a translation of *De rebus ac vocabulis*. There is a text of the translation of *Cyclops* in De Vocht's *Earliest English Translations* 7–31 and in Spurgeon 193–223.

POLYPHEMUS,¹ CANNIUS²

Cannius What's Polyphemus hunting here?

Polyphemus What could I be hunting without dog or spear? Is that your
5 question?

Cannius Some wood nymph, perhaps.³

Polyphemus A good guess. Look, here's my hunting net.

Cannius What a sight! Bacchus in a lion's skin⁴ – Polyphemus with a book⁵
– a cat in a saffron gown!⁶

10 **Polyphemus** I've painted this little book not only in saffron but bright red
and blue, too.

Cannius I'm not talking about saffron; I said something in Greek.⁷ – Seems
to be a soldierly book, for it's protected by bosses, plates, and brass clasps.

Polyphemus Take a good look at it.

Cannius I'm looking. Very fine, but you haven't yet decorated it enough.

Polyphemus What's lacking?

Cannius You should have added your coat of arms.

Polyphemus What coat of arms?

- 5 **Cannius** The head of Silenus peering out of a wine jug.⁸ But what's the book about? The art of drinking?⁹

Polyphemus Be careful you don't blurt out blasphemy.

Cannius What, you don't mean it's something sacred?

Polyphemus The most sacred of all, the Gospels.

- 10 **Cannius** By Hercules!¹⁰ What has Polyphemus to do with the Gospels?

Polyphemus You might as well ask what a Christian has to do with Christ.

Cannius I'm not sure a halberd isn't more fitting for the likes of you.¹¹ If I were at sea and met a stranger who looked like this, I'd take him for a pirate; if I met him in a wood, for a bandit.

- 15 **Polyphemus** Yet this very book of Gospels teaches us not to judge by appearances.¹² Just as a haughty spirit often lurks under an ash-coloured cowl, so a cropped head, curled beard, stern brow, wild eyes, plumed cap, military cloak, and slashed breeches sometimes cover a true Christian heart.¹³

- 20 **Cannius** Of course. Sometimes a sheep lurks in wolf's clothing, too. And, if you trust fables, an ass in a lion's skin.¹⁴

Polyphemus What's more, I know a man who has a sheep's head and a fox's heart. I could wish him friends as fair as his eyes are dark and that he be as truly golden as the sallow gold of his complexion.¹⁵

- 25 **Cannius** If a man with a sheepskin cap has a sheep's head, what a load you carry, with both a sheep and an ostrich on your head! And isn't it rather ridiculous to have a bird on your head and an ass in your heart?

Polyphemus That hurt!

- 30 **Cannius** But it would be well if, as you've decorated the Gospels with various ornaments, the Gospels in turn adorned you. You've decorated them with colours; I wish they might embellish you with good morals.

Polyphemus I'll see to that.

Cannius After your fashion, yes.

- 35 **Polyphemus** But insults aside, you don't condemn those who carry a volume of the Gospels about, do you?

Cannius The last person in the world to do that.¹⁶

Polyphemus What? I seem to you the least person in the world, when I'm taller than you by an ass's head?

- 40 **Cannius** I don't believe you'd be that much taller even if the ass pricked up its ears.¹⁷

Polyphemus Certainly by a buffalo's.

Cannius I like the comparison. But I said 'last'; I wasn't calling you 'least.'

Polyphemus What's the difference between an egg and an egg?¹⁸

Cannius What's the difference between middle finger and little finger?

Polyphemus The middle one's longer.

5 **Cannius** Very good. What's the difference between ass ears and wolf ears?

Polyphemus Wolf ears are shorter.

Cannius That's right.

Polyphemus But I'm in the habit of measuring long and short by span and ell, not by ears.

10 **Cannius** Well, the man who carried Christ was called Christopher.¹⁹ You, who carry the Gospels, ought to be called Gospel-bearer²⁰ instead of Polyphemus.

Polyphemus Don't you think it's holy to carry the Gospels?

Cannius No – unless you'd agree that asses are mighty holy.

15 **Polyphemus** How so?

Cannius Because one of them can carry three thousand books of this kind. I should think you'd be equal to that load if fitted with the right pack-saddle.

20 **Polyphemus** There's nothing far-fetched in thus crediting an ass with holiness because he carried Christ.²¹

Cannius I don't envy you that holiness. And if you like, I'll give you relics of the ass that carried Christ, so you can kiss them.

Polyphemus A gift I'll be glad to get. For by touching the body of Christ that ass was consecrated.

25 **Cannius** Obviously those who smote Christ touched him, too.²²

Polyphemus But tell me seriously, isn't carrying the Gospels about a reverent thing to do?²³

Cannius Reverent if done sincerely, without hypocrisy.

30 **Polyphemus** Hypocrisy's for monks. What has a soldier to do with hypocrisy?

Cannius But first tell me what hypocrisy is.²⁴

Polyphemus Professing something other than what you really mean.

Cannius But what does carrying a copy of the Gospels profess? A gospel life, doesn't it?

35 **Polyphemus** I suppose so.

Cannius Therefore, when the life doesn't correspond to the book, isn't that hypocrisy?

Polyphemus Apparently. But what is it truly to bear the gospel?

Cannius Some bear it in their hands, as the Franciscans do their Rule.²⁵

40 Parisian porters, and asses and geldings, can do the same. There are those who bear it in their mouths, harping on nothing but Christ and the gospel.

That's pharisaical. Some bear it in their hearts. The true gospel-bearer, then, is one who carries it in hands and mouth *and* heart.

Polyphemus Where are these?

Cannius In churches – the deacons, who bear the book, read it to the
5 congregation, and have it by heart.²⁶

Polyphemus Though not all who bear the gospel in their hearts are devout.

Cannius Don't quibble. A man doesn't bear it in his heart unless he loves it through and through. Nobody loves it wholeheartedly unless he emulates the gospel in his manner of living.

10 **Polyphemus** I don't follow these subtleties.

Cannius But I'll tell you more bluntly.²⁷ If you carry a jar of Beaune wine²⁸ on your shoulder, it's just a burden, isn't it?

Polyphemus That's all.

Cannius But if you hold the wine in your throat, and presently spit it out?

15 **Polyphemus** Useless – though really, I'm not accustomed to doing that.

Cannius But if – as you *are* accustomed – you take a long drink?

Polyphemus Nothing more heavenly.

Cannius Your whole body glows; your face turns rosy; your expression grows merry.

20 **Polyphemus** Exactly.

Cannius The gospel has the same effect when it penetrates the heart. It makes a new man of you.

Polyphemus So I don't seem to you to live according to the gospel?

Cannius You can best decide that question yourself.

25 **Polyphemus** If it could be decided with a battle-axe²⁹ –

Cannius If someone called you a liar or a rake to your face, what would you do?

Polyphemus What would I do? He'd feel my fists.

Cannius What if someone hit you hard?

30 **Polyphemus** I'd break his neck for that.

Cannius But your book teaches you to repay insults with a soft answer,³⁰ and 'whoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.'³¹

Polyphemus I've read that, but it slipped my mind.

35 **Cannius** You pray frequently, I dare say.

Polyphemus That's pharisaical.

Cannius Long-winded but insincere praying is pharisaical.³² But your book teaches us to pray without ceasing, yet sincerely.³³

Polyphemus Still, I do pray sometimes.

40 **Cannius** When?

Polyphemus Whenever I think of it – once or twice a week.

Cannius What do you pray?

Polyphemus The Lord's Prayer.

Cannius How often?

Polyphemus Once. For the Gospel forbids vain repetition as 'much
5 speaking.'³⁴

Cannius Can you concentrate on the Paternoster while repeating it?

Polyphemus Never tried. Isn't it enough to say the words?

Cannius I don't know, except that God hears only the utterance of the heart.
Do you fast often?

10 **Polyphemus** Never.

Cannius But your book recommends prayer and fasting.

Polyphemus I'd recommend them too if my belly did not demand something
else.

Cannius But Paul says those who serve their bellies aren't serving Jesus
15 Christ.³⁵ Do you eat meat on any day whatever?

Polyphemus Any day it's offered.

Cannius Yet a man as tough as you are could live on hay or the bark of
trees.

Polyphemus But Christ said that a man is not defiled by what he eats.³⁶

20 **Cannius** True, if it's eaten in moderation, without giving offence. But Paul,
the disciple of Christ, prefers starvation to offending a weak brother by his
food;³⁷ and he calls upon us to follow his example, in order that we may
please men in all things.

Polyphemus Paul's Paul, and I'm me.

25 **Cannius** But Egon's job is to feed she-goats.³⁸

Polyphemus I'd prefer to eat one.

Cannius A fine wish! You'll be a billy-goat rather than a she-goat.

Polyphemus I said *eat* one, not *be* one.³⁹

Cannius Very prettily said. – Are you generous to the poor?

30 **Polyphemus** I've nothing to give.

Cannius But you would have if you lived soberly and worked hard.

Polyphemus I'm fond of loafing.

Cannius Do you keep God's commandments?

Polyphemus That's tiresome.

35 **Cannius** Do you do penance for your sins?

Polyphemus Christ has paid for us.⁴⁰

Cannius Then why do you insist you love the gospel?

Polyphemus I'll tell you. A certain Franciscan in our neighbourhood kept
babbling from the pulpit against Erasmus' New Testament.⁴¹ I met the man
40 privately, grabbed him by the hair with my left hand, and punched him with
my right. I gave him a hell of a beating; made his whole face swell. What do

you say to that? Isn't that promoting the gospel? Next I gave him absolution by banging him on the head three times with this very same book, raising three lumps, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Cannius The evangelical spirit, all right! This is certainly defending the gospel with the Gospel.

Polyphemus I ran across another member of the same order who never stopped raving against Erasmus. Fired with evangelical zeal, I threatened the fellow so much he begged pardon on both knees and admitted the devil had put him up to saying what he said. If he hadn't done this, my halberd would have bounced against his head. I looked as fierce as Mars in battle. This took place before witnesses.

Cannius I'm surprised the man didn't drop dead on the spot. But let's go on. Do you live chastely?

Polyphemus I may – when I'm old. But shall I confess the truth to you, Cannius?

Cannius I'm no priest. If you want to confess, find somebody else.

Polyphemus Usually I confess to God,⁴² but to you I admit I'm not yet a perfect follower of the gospel; just an ordinary chap. My kind have four gospels. Four things above all we gospellers seek: full bellies; plenty of work for the organs below the belly; a livelihood from somewhere or other; finally, freedom to do as we like.⁴³ If we get these, we shout in our cups, '*Io triumphe*;⁴⁴ *Io, Paean!*'⁴⁵ The gospel flourishes! Christ reigns!

Cannius That's an Epicurean life,⁴⁶ surely, not an evangelical one.

Polyphemus I don't deny it, but you know Christ is omnipotent and can turn us into other men in the twinkling of an eye.

Cannius Into swine, too, which I think is more likely than into good men.

Polyphemus I wish there were no worse creatures in the world than swine, oxen, asses, and camels. You can meet many men who are fiercer than lions, greedier than wolves, more lecherous than sparrows, more snappish than dogs, more venomous than vipers.⁴⁷

Cannius But now it's time for you to begin changing from brute to man.

Polyphemus You do well to warn me, for prophets these days declare the end of the world is at hand.⁴⁸

Cannius All the more reason to hurry.

Polyphemus I await the hand of Christ.

Cannius See that you are pliant material for his hand. But where do they get the notion that the end of the world is near?

Polyphemus They say it's because men behave now just as they did before the Flood overwhelmed them. They feast, drink, stuff themselves, marry and are given in marriage, whore, buy, sell, pay and charge interest, build buildings.⁴⁹ Kings make war, priests are zealous to increase their

wealth, theologians invent syllogisms, monks roam through the world,⁵⁰ the commons riot, Erasmus writes colloquies.⁵¹ In short, no calamity is lacking: hunger, thirst, robbery, war, plague, sedition, poverty. Doesn't this prove human affairs are at an end?

5 **Cannius** In this mass of woes, what worries you most?

Polyphemus Guess.

Cannius That your purse is full of cobwebs.⁵²

Polyphemus Damned if you haven't hit it!⁵³ – Just now I'm on my way back from a drinking party. Some other time, when I'm sober, I'll argue with you
10 about the gospel, if you like.

Cannius When shall I see you sober?

Polyphemus When I'm sober.

Cannius When will you be so?

Polyphemus When you see me so.⁵⁴ Meantime, my dear Cannius, good
15 luck.⁵⁵

Cannius I hope you, in turn, become what you're called.⁵⁶

Polyphemus To prevent you from outdoing me in courtesy, I pray that Cannius, as the name implies, may never lack a can!⁵⁷

NOTES

- 1 For further biographical details of Felix Rex see Alphonse Roersch *L'humanisme belge* (Brussels 1910) 83–100; Allen Ep 2130 introduction; and CEBR. J. Hoyoux thought Polyphemus was not to be identified with Felix Rex but with the one-eyed scribe Pieter Meghen ('Les moyens d'existence d'Erasmus' BHR 5 [1944] 56–7). Erasmus, who knew Meghen well, calls him 'Cyclops' in Allen Epp 477:22, 787:15, but usually refers to him as *cocles* or *unoculus* 'one-eyed.' The classical Cyclops, Polyphemus in the *Odyssey*, was *unoculus*, to be sure, but the fact that Erasmus and his friends may have dubbed Meghen 'Cyclops' does not diminish the far greater probability that Felix Rex was the original of the Cyclops in this colloquy. We know he wanted to be in the book (Allen Ep 2147:13–20). His established nickname of 'Polyphemus' is of course a synonym of 'Cyclops.'

On Pieter Meghen, the scribe famous as a copyist of manuscripts in England, see J.B. Trapp in CEBR and 'Pieter Meghen 1466/7–1540: Scribe and Courier' *Erasmus in English* 11 (1981–2) 28–35, the same article, but with illustrations and extra references. An important article by Andrew J. Brown, 'The Date of Erasmus' Latin Translation of the New Testament' *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 8 (1984) 351–80 corrects previous assumptions about the date of Erasmus' Latin translation of the New Testament in relation to the date of copies of biblical texts made by Meghen; see 'The Young Man and the Harlot' n19. Polyphemus was impulsive, adventurous, not without learning, but brash. Erasmus was often exasperated by his conduct, especially his drinking. See for example Allen Ep 2288:24 and 870:8–14 of the colloquy. Bonifacius Amerbach,

writing from Basel in May 1532, remarks that if his behaviour continued he would be known as Polypotus ('boozer') instead of Polyphemus (Allen Ep 2649:26–7). Erasmus was glad to see the last of him. 'I am so fond of him that I wish he were in the Indies' (Allen Ep 2415:14).

- 2 On Nicolaas Kan see *Litterae virorum eruditorum ad Franciscum Craneveldium 1522–1528* ed H. de Vocht (Louvain 1928) 617–19 and CEBR. The only surviving letter by Erasmus to him contains advice on proper behaviour when visiting foreign countries, including England (Allen Ep 1832:24–32, 55–64). De Vocht implies that Kan was in Erasmus' service as early as 1524 (*Litterae ad Craneveldium* 618), but the earliest date we can be certain of appears to be 1527. For various reasons relations between them cooled after publication of this colloquy. In a letter of November 1529 Erasmus refers to him as 'intolerabilis' (Allen Ep 2236:14). In April 1531 he mentions a letter from Kan, who by that time had become a priest (Allen Ep 2484:6–8). By this date the bad feeling between them had subsided somewhat, but they were never on very cordial terms again.
- 3 *hamadryadem*; Virgil *Eclogues* 10.62; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.690
- 4 For the origins of the story see *Adagia* I iii 66. In the seventh of the *Homeric Hymns* (not mentioned by Erasmus) the usually effeminate Bacchus (Dionysus), after being captured by pirates and taken aboard ship, turns into a lion. The sailors, terrified, escape by jumping overboard. Cf Ovid *Metamorphoses* 3.582–691.
- 5 A marvel; borrowed, with the name changed, from the opening of Lucian's *Lexiphanes*. His *Adversum indoctum* too may have been in Erasmus' mind here.
- 6 Greek in the original: γαλή κροκωτόν (*Adagia* I ii 72). The proverb means something totally incongruous or ludicrous, as formal dress would be for an uncouth and undeserving person or, in this instance, a book in the hands of Polyphemus; for another example see *Ciceronianus* LB I 991C / ASD I-2 634:17–23 / CWE 28 380. The adage can be translated in various ways: 'a party-frock for the cat' in CWE 31 211; cf the familiar 'Puss in boots,' the English title of Charles Perrault's famous tale 'Le chat botté' (1697) in his *Contes*. Erasmus was fond of this proverb. He applied it to himself when referring ironically to rumours that he would be offered a cardinalate (see 'Inns' n13).
- 7 Polyphemus had caught κροτωτόν but missed γαλή.
- 8 On Silenus see 'A Fish Diet' n237.
- 9 'Polyphemus bibit . . . fortiter' (Allen Ep 2288:24). He was then (March 1530) in Bohemia.
- 10 Greek in the original
- 11 On Polyphemus' desire for military service see his amusing letter of March 1529, in which he says he has been promised a place in Archduke Ferdinand's army (Allen Ep 2130:60–78). The promise was not kept, nor is it easy to believe his sponsors were serious in making it.
- 12 A recollection of John 7:24; aptly quoted, for it shows that Polyphemus does know something of what is inside the book he carries. The description that follows includes features recognizable in many pictures of soldiers in the time of Erasmus. See notes to 'Military Affairs' and 'The Soldier and the Carthusian.' Robert Greene remembered this paragraph in *A Notable Discovery of Cozenage* (1591) where he speaks of 'a terrible fellow with a side hair and a fearful beard,

as though he were of Polyphemus' cut' (*Elizabethan Prose Fiction* ed Merritt Lawlis [New York 1967] 421). The soldiers in the two colloquies named above in this note wore beards; that Polyphemus too was bearded is attested by Erasmus (Allen Ep 2112:32). On 'military cloak' (*sagum*) see *Adagia* iv viii 10; on 'slashed breeches' (*caligae intersectae*), 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n1. Erasmus speaks disparagingly of such fashions, which are foolish affectations (*De civilitate* LB I 1037B / CWE 25 279). In 1530 the city of Bern decreed that wearers of slashed breeches be punished (J.M. Vincent *Costume and Conduct in the Laws of Basel, Bern, and Zurich 1370–1800* [Baltimore 1935] 47). Calvin opposed such breeches for the Geneva militia, considering them evidence of intolerable pride (Eugène Choisy *La théocratie à Genève au temps de Calvin* 90, cited by J.H. Hexter 'Utopia and Geneva' in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe* ed Theodore K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel [Princeton 1969] 79). *Caligae*, 'soldiers' boots' in classical usage ('sandals' in Acts 12:8 Vulg; cf *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 481F), also meant 'greaves,' then 'hose,' in late medieval and Renaissance Latin. 'Hose' or 'drawers' covered waist and legs; see 'Knucklebones' 892:7–8, where 'the sort of hose' that covers the body from waist to toe is *caligarum genus*.

13 A similar remark occurs in *De concordia* LB v 483B–C.

14 *Adagia* I iii 66, I vii 12

15 What's more . . . complexion.] In the first edition of this colloquy, published in March 1529, shortly before Erasmus moved from Basel to Freiburg, the second sentence was followed (after 'complexion') by 'briefly, by a heart as big as his nose.' (On big noses see 'Benefices' introduction and n9.) These words were deleted when the second edition was printed in September 1529. Polyphemus' remark and Cannius' reply caused Erasmus embarrassment because the passage was immediately taken as ridicule of Johannes Oecolampadius, the eminent Basel scholar and divine. He and Erasmus had long been friends (see Ernst Staehelin 'Erasmus und Ökolampad in ihrem Ringen um die Kirche Jesu Christi' in *Gedenkschrift* 166–82), and Oecolampadius had helped Erasmus with Hebrew in his biblical studies, but estrangement developed after Oecolampadius became a sacramentarian and a leader of the Zwinglians in Basel. Erasmus may have intended for some time to write something against him and his change of theological views; De Vocht thinks for nearly two years (*Earliest English Translations* xii), though this is not certain. What does seem certain is that Erasmus was annoyed by Oecolampadius and that consequently he can hardly be taken at his word when he assures Oecolampadius that the offensive passage was aimed at Nicolaas Kan, who had a prominent nose, that both Kan and Felix Rex wanted to be in a colloquy (Allen Ep 2147:13–20), and furthermore that he had not known Kan wore a sheepskin cap similar to Oecolampadius'. In a letter to Oecolampadius c 10 April 1529, Erasmus blandly denies malevolence in the colloquy and passes the affair off as an unfortunate misunderstanding. He repeats this assertion a few months later (Allen Ep 2196:81–6). He does not say plainly that Oecolampadius himself resented the passage in question but that certain clerics in Basel did so. At any rate he found it prudent to explain away the offending words and to reassure Oecolampadius, who seems to have accepted the explanation with good grace after a talk with Erasmus (Allen Ep 2196:87–93) and was generous enough to express regret at Erasmus' decision to emigrate to Freiburg (Allen

Ep 2149 introduction). Whether or not Erasmus had intended a thrust at Oecolampadius, his prompt and tactful retreat is understandable though perhaps less than wholly sincere. He had had enough trouble of late in Basel and did not want more.

For a sketch of Oecolampadius' career see Gordon Rupp *Patterns of Reformation* (London 1969) 3–46; on the religious situation in Basel during Erasmus' final months there in 1529, Bainton *Erasmus of Christendom* 217–23.

- 16 *minime gentium*; taken by Polyphemus as derogatory, but Cannius assures him (866:1) that he meant not 'least' but 'not in the least' or 'not for anything in the world.' The word-play is possible because *minime* can be either an adjective in the vocative case ('O least of men') or an adverb ('least in the world,' ie 'not for anything'). Cf Terence *Phormio* 1033, *Eunuchus* 625.
- 17 Also Terentian (*Andria* 934); *Adagia* III ii 56
- 18 *Adagia* I v 10
- 19 On this saint see 'The Shipwreck' n26; on the name, Allen Ep 3086:1–10.
- 20 That is, Evangelioiphorus
- 21 This witticism is older than the *Colloquies*. Poggio, in his *Facetiae*, tells of a priest insistently asking his congregation who could have been more fortunate than St Christopher, who carried his Saviour on his back. 'The ass,' replied one of his auditors, 'who bore both the Son and his Mother,' alluding to the flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:14) and Christ's entrance into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:5). See Poggio *Opera omnia* (Basel 1538; repr 4 vols Turin 1964–9) I 473. Luther, in more serious vein, says in a sermon, 'If a great good work would accomplish anything' towards salvation, 'asses and horses would also earn the kingdom of heaven' (see Harold J. Grimm 'The Human Element in Luther's Sermons' ARG 49 [1958] 56).
- 22 Matt 27:26; Mark 14:65, 15:15, 19; John 18:22, 19:1, 3
- 23 A student in Wittenberg testified in 1520 that there were practically no students who did not go round with the Bible in hand (Ernest G. Schwiebert 'New Groups and Ideas at the University of Wittenberg' ARG 49 [1958] 71). In the letter dedicating his Paraphrase on John's Gospel to Archduke Ferdinand (1523), Erasmus emphasizes as he does here the difference between bearing the Gospel on one's person and in one's heart. Some people carried verses of John's Gospel around their necks to ward off sickness or accidents (Allen Ep 1333:250–7 / CWE Ep 1333:266–73).
- 24 For a description see *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 34E–F on Matt 6:2; cf *Lingua* LB IV 691C / ASD IV-1A 82:853–62 / CWE 29 315. A hypocrite acts according to whether he thinks God is watching (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 781A).
- 25 Franciscans do not feel safe unless they have a copy of the Rule with them (*Paraclesis* LB V 142F).
- 26 They read or chanted the Gospel at mass.
- 27 *crassiore Minerva*, a favourite proverb; *Adagia* I i 37, 38
- 28 On Erasmus' preference for Beaune see 'The Profane Feast' n16. Alessandro Benedetti, in his *Diaria de bello Carolino* 1496 (ed and trans Dorothy M. Schullian [New York 1967] 134) says that to German mercenaries wine was more important than gold or silver.
- 29 *bipenni*, a double-edged axe
- 30 Prov 15:1
- 31 Matt 5:39; Luke 6:29

- 32 Matt 6:5–7
- 33 1 Thess 5:17. On prayer see 'Youth' n36.
- 34 *battologiam*. The word, used in Matt 6:7, is adapted from a rare Greek verb meaning 'stammer,' 'babble,' 'chatter,' and hence glossed as 'much speaking.' Its origin is obscure, despite Erasmus' elucidations in *Adagia* III vii 76, but see his note on Matt 6:7 in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 35E–36D. Its presence in the Gospel has made it familiar. In Erasmus it is synonymous with *multiloquium*. *Modus orandi Deum* has a careful distinction between *battologia* or *multiloquium* and authentic fervour in prayer (LB V 1112B–F); for a defence of his opinions see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 895C–896C.
- 35 Rom 16:18; but the verse is not about gluttons, though Cannius implies it is.
- 36 Matt 15:11. For Erasmus' translation of Origen's comment on this passage see LB VIII 466A–467A.
- 37 Rom 14:15; 1 Cor 6:12–13, 8:13, 9:19–22, 10:31–3. See the exegesis of 1 Cor 6:12 in 'The Godly Feast' 189:37–191:37 and the discussion of law versus Christian liberty in 'A Fish Diet.'
- 38 Shepherd in Virgil *Eclogues* 3.2. Cannius pretends to have misunderstood Polyphemus' 'ego sum ego' for 'ego sum Egon.'
- 39 'Esse dixi pro edere.' The pun is possible because *esse* is a form of the infinitive of *edo* 'eat' and also the infinitive of *sum* 'be.'
- 40 Erasmus notes in *De libero arbitrio* (LB IX 1247A) the Lutheran emphasis that 'there is no need of any satisfaction' (part of the sacrament of penance, along with contrition and confession), 'since Christ has paid the penalties for the sins of all' who truly repent. See Luther *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae* WA 6 544, 548 / LW 36 83–4, 89.
- 41 Identified as Frans Titelmans of Hasselt (Smith *Key* 48), formerly of Antwerp but now of Louvain. He was one of the traditionalists who opposed Erasmus on points of New Testament interpretation in 1528–9 and was therefore an appropriate candidate for attention in this colloquy. Erasmus had admonished him in a letter as early as May 1527 (Allen Ep 1823) and ridiculed him again in a letter of January 1530 (Allen Ep 2261:71–7). For other anecdotes of Franciscans hostile to Erasmus' New Testament see 'The Young Man and the Harlot' 384:35–385:19 and 'The Sermon.'
- The New Testament carried about by Polyphemus was probably a copy of an edition of Erasmus' Latin translation, first issued separately in September 1519.
- 42 Erasmus approves both of the customary sacramental confession to a priest and of confessing in secret to God. He compares the two modes of confessing in *Exomologesis* LB V 145A–170D. See also the counsel in 'Youth' 96:31–97:35.
- 43 Erasmus made the same remark about the evangelicals just a year earlier, March 1528 (Allen Ep 1977:43; repeated in 1529 in *Epistola contra pseudevangelicos* LB X 1579D, 1580A).
- 44 Horace *Odes* 4.2.49–50
- 45 On this phrase see *Adagia* II iv 28.
- 46 In the usual sense of prizing pleasure. Contrast the use of the word in the colloquy 'The Epicurean.'
- 47 Cf the passage beginning 'Reflect that whatever variation there is in kinds or classes of animals, or in individual ones, all this exists in mankind' in 'The Lover of Glory' 970:12–41 and the observations in 'Sympathy.' The

presence of beastly characteristics in men, and the representation of human passions or traits by animal terms, have always been commonplace in moral and symbolic writings, both sacred and secular. See Burton *Anatomy of Melancholy* 'Democritus Junior to the Reader' (1 65–66); William M. Carroll *Animal Conventions in English Renaissance Non-Religious Prose* (New York 1954); Elizabeth C. Evans 'Physiognomics in the Ancient World' *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* new series 59 (1969) part 5 1–101.

- 48 Cf Erasmus' observation concerning Anabaptists in a passage inserted into the text of Ep 1369 (1523) when it was published in the *Opus Epistolarum* of 1529: 'They wish to be taken for prophets, but everyone laughs at them' (Allen Ep 1369:45 / CWE Ep 1369:49–50; Allen failed to date the passage in question correctly). Zürich and Basel had been troubled by Anabaptists from time to time and took severe measures against them. On the expectations of some Anabaptists concerning the end of the world see G.H. Williams *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia 1962) 45, 163, 164, 174, 176, 178, 189, 226, 277, and passim. When reporting in April 1529 the visit to Basel of an itinerant evangelical, evidently Anabaptist, who preached 'Repent, repent, repent: the hand of the Lord is imminent' and had gone to the cathedral to denounce the corrupt lives of the clergy, Erasmus remarks that the reader must decide for himself whether the incident was more in keeping with Democritus or Heraclitus, with laughter or tears (Allen Ep 2149:4–13). Although fully aware of the Anabaptists' eccentricities and excesses, he commends, on another occasion, what he has heard of their sincerity and morality (Allen Ep 2134:212–15). Despite the aversion of the orthodox, and the fright or hatred of the public and of governments, whose memories of the Peasants' Revolt of 1524–6 caused them to regard all so called Anabaptists as suspect (see 'The New Mother' n11 and Allen Epp 2149:37–50, 2241:15–18) – attitudes confirmed some years later as a result of the behaviour of Jan of Leiden and his followers in Münster in 1534–6 – Erasmus, who feared and hated violence from whatever source, nevertheless acknowledged the moral qualities of peaceable Anabaptists. On Jan of Leiden see Williams *The Radical Reformation* 368–75 and CEBR.
- 49 A standard comparison, based on Matt 24:38–9 and Luke 17:26–8 (cf also Eccles 2:4, 'I builded me houses' – the work of vanity). It appears in a letter from Jan van Fevijn to Craneveldt in 1524 (*Litterae ad Craneveldium* [n2 above] 230 Ep 89:29), and cf Allen Ep 2260:56–61 (January 1530, to Pieter Gillis). Erasmus exclaims, after a gloomy passage on the evils of the day in another letter, 'What remains except the final calamity, the Flood?' (Allen Ep 2149:48–9; similar pessimism is expressed in Allen Ep 2236:28–30). A conjunction of planets in the sign of Pisces in February 1524 led some astrologers to predict a universal flood (Thorndike *Magic and Experimental Science* v 178–233).
- 50 Instead of remaining in their monastic houses as they should. *Stabilitas loci* was explicitly required by the Benedictine Rule (chapter 58) and in principle by other monastic orders. The comment could also refer to the mendicant friars; see 'The Funeral' n17.
- 51 With the whole description of the evils of the time compare, in the *Colloquies*, 'The New Mother' 592:17–35 and, on the wars, 'A Fish Diet' 688:14–689:18 and 'Charon.' The ironic climax to the list of disasters, though characteristic, is the only pleasantry of the kind in the *Colloquies*.

- 52 Echoing Catullus 13.7–8
53 *rem acu tetigisti*; *Adagia* II iv 93, from Plautus *Rudens* 1306
54 With this exchange, cf 'Patterns' 12:3–6. On Polyphemus' drinking see n1 and 865:4–6 above.
55 *Sis felix*, 'be happy,' with a pun on the speaker's own name, Felix, as though Polyphemus is saying 'You be Felix.'
56 That is, 'Gospel-bearer' (*Evangeliophorus*), though Polyphemus 'famous,' 'much talked of,' may also be meant
57 Of liquor; a pun on Cannius' name (*Kan* 'mug' or 'cup')

NON-SEQUITURS

Ἀπροσδιόνυσα, sive Absurda

First printed in the *Colloquia* in the March 1529 edition. On the date see the introduction to 'Charon' 818–19.

Some of the younger readers for whom the early colloquies were written may have been puzzled at first by this dialogue, a pleasantry that illustrates talking at cross-purposes. The Greek title, Ἀπροσδιόνυσα 'not pertaining to Dionysus,' was in classical antiquity applied to something irrelevant to the subject at hand (see Lucian *Dionysius* 5). According to one explanation in *Adagia* II iv 57: *Nihil ad Bacchum* 'What has this to do with Bacchus?' (Οὐδὲν πρὸς Διόνυσον) the saying arose when Greek poets began to write plays dealing with material other than the myth of Dionysus (Bacchus), which by tradition was their original and proper subject, with the result that the spectators shouted 'What has this to do with Bacchus?' (LB II 542A / CWE 33 220). The phrase became proverbial as a reminder or admonition that one should stop digressing and get back to the point. *Adagia* II iv 57 presents various ancient texts and quotations about the proverb but leaves the question of its origin undecided. The present dialogue is Lucianic in manner, and Lucian quotes the phrase in his *Bacchus* 5 and 6, but there is no direct model in Lucian for Erasmus' colloquy. Cf also *Adagia* II ii 49.

ANNIUS, LEUCIUS¹

Annius I hear you attended the wedding of Pancratius and Albina.

Leucius Never did I have an unluckier voyage than I had that time.

5 **Annius** What's that you say? Was there such a crowd?

Leucius And never were my chances of survival slimmer than on that occasion.

Annius See what wealth can do! Few would come to *my* wedding, and poor ones at that.

10 **Leucius** Scarcely had we put to sea when a gale came up.

Annius You describe an assembly of gods. So many princes attended? So many noblewomen?

Leucius The north wind ripped the sail to pieces and blew it away.

Annius The bride I know: the loveliest thing imaginable.

15 **Leucius** Presently the waves smashed the rudder.

Annius So everyone supposes. And the bridegroom is not altogether inferior to her in good looks, as they say.

Leucius How do you imagine we felt then?

Annius It's rare enough nowadays for brides to be virgins.

5 **Leucius** We had to row for it.

Annius You tell of an incredible dowry.

Leucius Then – presto! Another danger.

Annius Why did they entrust an innocent to such a brute?

Leucius A pirate ship came into view.

10 **Annius** That's the way it goes: in many a man villainy makes up for age.

Leucius There we had a double fight on our hands: one with the sea, the other with the pirates.

Annius Whew! So many presents? while nobody gives a penny to the poor.

15 **Leucius** What, were we to surrender? Quite the contrary: mortal danger only made us more resolute.

Annius If what you say is true, I fear the marriage will be barren.

Leucius Not at all: we threw in our grappling hooks.

Annius Oh-ho, something new – pregnant before marriage?

20 **Leucius** Had you witnessed that struggle, you'd allow I'm no weakling.

Annius As I hear, this marriage was not only a mating but a consummating too.

Leucius We boarded the pirate ship.

25 **Annius** But I'm surprised that you, who aren't related, were invited when I was passed over. I'm connected with the bride's father in the third degree of kinship.

Leucius We hurled them headlong into the sea.

Annius You're right; a man who's down on his luck has no relatives.

30 **Leucius** The booty we divided among ourselves.

Annius I'll protest to the girl the first time I see her, too.

Leucius Soon came an unexpected calm; halcyon weather,² you'd have called it.

Annius If she has wealth, I have will. I care nothing for her generosity.

35 **Leucius** So instead of one ship we brought two into port.

Annius Let him who keeps her be angry!

Leucius Where am I going, you ask? To church, to dedicate a piece of the sail to St Nicholas.³

40 **Annius** I'm not free today, for I'm expecting guests at home. Another time I won't refuse.

NOTES

- 1 The speakers' names are borrowed from Greek. Annius means 'grieved' or 'gloomy'; Leucius means 'happy.' They do not appear in other colloquies, but for speculation about Annius see ASD I-3 610:2n.
- 2 Calm, serene days when halcyons (kingfishers), according to ancient belief, charmed the sea in order that they might breed in their floating nests and at the same time do something for the general good, if we may believe Pliny (*Naturalis historia* 10.89-90). See *Parabolae* CWE 23 227, 257-8.
- 3 A bishop of Lycia (fourth century). Nearly everything else about his life is uncertain, but what is beyond doubt is his widespread and enduring popularity in art and legend as the patron saint of sailors, children, merchants, many churches, and Russia. His name is no longer in the liturgical calendar of the Roman church.

THE KNIGHT WITHOUT A HORSE, OR FAKED NOBILITY

Ἰππεὺς ἄνιππος, sive Ementita nobilitas

First printed in the *Colloquia* in the March 1529 edition. On the date see the introduction to 'Charon' 818–19.

Erasmus had strict opinions about nobility; an eloquent exposition of them can be found in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (LB v 668D–670A). His equally strong convictions about false or degenerate nobility are expressed in many places, including the *Colloquies*. In 'The Knight without a Horse' his depiction of Harpalus is both a personal attack and a satire of a type of pretender for whom he had only contempt. This self-styled knight was recognized by some of Erasmus' readers as Heinrich Eppendorf, a native of Saxony, whose name is connected with an earlier colloquy, 'The Cheating Horse-Dealer.' Eppendorf, whose claims to noble birth are derided by Erasmus, became acquainted with him in Louvain in 1520 and in 1522 knew him well in Basel. When Erasmus quarrelled with Ulrich von Hutten over Luther, Eppendorf sided with Hutten, then became estranged from Erasmus and later actively hostile. He caused Erasmus serious annoyance for some years, and Erasmus for his part was unrelenting.

Eppendorf came to Basel again in January 1528 and had an interview with Erasmus. It was not a success. Both spoke at one time or another of going to law, but were persuaded to allow Erasmus' close friends Beatus Rhenanus and Bonifacius Amerbach to arbitrate their dispute. Eppendorf was to abandon his intention of publishing a book against Erasmus, who in turn was to dedicate a book to Eppendorf. The attempted reconciliation proved to be only a truce at best, and the quarrel continued for several years. Not only did Erasmus evade his reluctant promise to dedicate something to Eppendorf, but in March 1529 he printed this colloquy, in which Eppendorf is exposed as merely a foolish pretender to nobility. In the September 1528 edition of his *Adagia* Erasmus had inserted a short but scornful passage (*Adagia* I ix 44 / LB II 349E–350E / CWE 32 204–5) on German Junkers, young wastrels who insolently boast of noble birth, to which they have no claim. The description closely resembles many lines in the present colloquy. 'Suppose one of them is born in a village – let us say his name is Ornithoplutus and his village called Isocômus – he never signs himself an Isocomian; any plebeian could do that. He is Ornithoplutus *von* Isocômum.' Since this fictitious name is an approximate translation of 'Heinrich von Eppendorf' into its Greek

equivalent, we can be certain that Erasmus is taunting Eppendorf in this passage.

In late 1530 Erasmus published *Admonitio adversus mendacium*, justifying his conduct in the long quarrel (LB x 1683c–1692b). Eppendorf replied with *Iusta querela* (text in Hutten *Opera* II 447–54). Like many controversies among the learned, this one was embittered by personal antipathies as well as self-righteous indignation. The course of it is summarized most conveniently by the article on Eppendorf in CEBR, but see also Allen introductions to Epp 1122 and 1934 and Allen IV 615–19 Appendix 14. On Hutten see references in ‘A Marriage in Name Only’ nn12 and 15 and CEBR. For many modern readers details of the quarrel are likely to be of less interest than the colloquy’s satirical picture of a swaggering knight, or so-called knight, a literary descendant of the *miles gloriosus* of ancient comedy and a popular figure in Renaissance as well as classical fiction and drama. Nestor’s ironic advice on how to be a fashionable young man about town on nothing a year – an inversion of the doctrines of the courtesy books – is another popular motif in Renaissance fiction.

HARPALUS, NESTOR¹

Harpalus You can help me by your advice. You’ll find I’m neither a forgetful nor an ungrateful fellow.

Nestor I’ll come to the rescue so that you can be what you’d like.

5 **Harpalus** But it’s not in our power to be born nobles.

Nestor If you’re not so by birth, strive by your good deeds to establish a noble line.

Harpalus A long, drawn-out business!

Nestor The emperor will sell you a title for a trifling sum.

10 **Harpalus** Nobility got by purchase is commonly an object of ridicule.

Nestor Since nothing is more absurd than faked nobility, why do you covet the title of knight so badly?²

Harpalus I’ve reasons – no slight ones, either – that I won’t mind telling to you if you’ll show me how to pass myself off on the public as a nobleman.

15 **Nestor** The name without the reality?³

Harpalus Reputation is the best substitute for reality. But come on, Nestor, let’s have your advice.⁴ When you hear my reasons, you’ll admit they’re worth the trouble.

Nestor Since that’s the way you want it, I’ll tell you. First of all, go far away
20 from home.

Harpalus I’m minding.

Nestor Force your way into the company of young blades who are genuinely high society.

Harpalus I understand.

Nestor From this time on you'll immediately be taken for the same sort as
5 those you associate with.

Harpalus Right you are.

Nestor See that there's nothing low-class about you.⁵

Harpalus What do you mean?

Nestor Your dress.⁶ Don't wear wool but either silk or, if you can't afford
10 that, fustian.⁷ Better plain canvas than patches.

Harpalus Correct.

Nestor See that nothing's whole but slash your cap, doublet, hose, shoes, nails if you can.⁸ Avoid mention of anything mean. If a stranger from Spain turns up, ask him how the emperor gets along with the pope, what your
15 kinsman the count of Nassau is doing,⁹ and what your other cronies are up to.

Harpalus I'll see to it.

Nestor Wear a small jewelled signet ring on your finger.

Harpalus If my purse will stand it.

Nestor A small brass ring gilded, with a fake jewel, costs little. But add a
20 shield with insignia.

Harpalus What do you advise me to choose?

Nestor Two milking-pails, if you like, and a tankard of beer.

Harpalus You're joking. Come on, tell me seriously.

Nestor Ever been in battle?
25

Harpalus Never even saw one.

Nestor But you've cut the throats of farmers' geese and capons now and then, I dare say.

Harpalus Many times – and quite gallantly, too.

Nestor Put a butcher-knife of silver and gilt heads of three geese on it.
30

Harpalus On what sort of field?

Nestor Why, gules, what else? – a memorial of blood bravely spilled.

Harpalus Yes, why not? Goose blood's as red as men's. But please go on.

Nestor Then be sure to have this shield hung up at the gates of every inn
35 you happen to stop at.¹⁰

Harpalus What sort of helmet shall I add?

Nestor You do well to remind me. Have one with a slit for the mouth.

Harpalus What for?

Nestor To allow you to breathe; secondly, to match your dress.¹¹ – What's to
40 crown it?

Harpalus I'm waiting.

Nestor The head of a dog with drooping ears.

Harpalus That's commonplace.

Nestor Add two horns; *that's* not common.¹²

Harpalus Good enough. But what beasts will support the shield?

5 **Nestor** Princes have a corner on stags, hounds, dragons, and griffins. Put two harpies on yours.¹³

Harpalus Excellent advice.

Nestor There's still the matter of a family name.¹⁴ In this connection you must be careful, first of all, not to let yourself be called, in vulgar fashion,

10 **Harpalus** Comensis but Harpalus von Como,¹⁵ for that's the aristocratic style;¹⁶ the other's fit for beggarly divines.

Harpalus So I remember.

Nestor Have you anything you could call your own?

Harpalus Not even a pigpen.

15 **Nestor** Were you born in a famous city?

Harpalus In an obscure village. You daren't lie to a person whose help you're after.

Nestor That's right. But is there no mountain in the neighbourhood of the village?

20 **Harpalus** Yes, there is.

Nestor And has it a rock somewhere or other?

Harpalus A very steep one.

Nestor Then you should be Harpalus, Knight of the Golden Rock.

Harpalus But the custom of nobles is for each one to have his own motto, as Maximilian¹⁷ used to have 'Observe the mean'; Philip,¹⁸ 'He who wills'; Charles,¹⁹ 'Farther still'; others likewise, each to his taste.

Nestor Do you inscribe: 'Cast all the dice.'²⁰

Harpalus An excellent suggestion, really.

Nestor Now to strengthen the popular impression, make up letters from eminent personages in which you're constantly addressed as 'most illustrious knight' and reference is made to great affairs, fiefs, castles, huge sums of money, offices, a wealthy marriage. See to it that letters of this kind fall into other people's hands as though dropped or inadvertently left behind.

Harpalus That will be easy for me, for I'm good at writing and I've practised
35 this skill a great deal; I can easily imitate anybody's hand.

Nestor Stick the letters inside your clothes sometimes or leave them in your purse, so the tailors will find them there when you have your clothes mended. They'll be sure to blab; and as soon as you learn of it, put on an indignant, injured look, as if the mischance offended you.

40 **Harpalus** This too I've long studied, so that I can change my countenance as easily as a mask.

Nestor Do it in such a way that the trick won't be found out and a convincing story is spread.

Harpalus I'll take good care to do that.

Nestor Next you should get hold of some accomplices, or even servants, who'll bow and scrape before you and address you in public as 'Herr Junker.'²¹ Don't be afraid of the expense of this. There are plenty of young chaps who like to play this part for nothing. What's more, this neighbourhood abounds in young fellows with a smattering of learning who have a marvellous passion, not to say an itch, for writing.²² And there's no lack of starving printers who'll stop at nothing if a profit's in prospect.²³ Bribe some of them to proclaim you in their pamphlets 'a nobleman of his country' and to reprint it frequently in capital letters. In this way they'll celebrate 'a nobleman of his country' even in Bohemia, for pamphlets circulate faster and farther than word of mouth or even chattering servants.

15 **Harpalus** Not a bad idea. But servants must be supported.

Nestor Yes, but you won't keep servants who are without hands and therefore helpless.²⁴ Let them be sent hither and yon; they'll turn up something. There are various opportunities for such things, you know.

Harpalus Enough; I understand perfectly.

20 **Nestor** And there are professions, too.

Harpalus I'm eager to hear about them.

Nestor Unless you're a good dicer, a skilful card player, an infamous whoremonger, a heavy drinker, a reckless spendthrift, a wastrel and heavily in debt, decorated with the French pox besides, hardly anyone will believe you're a knight.²⁵

Harpalus I'm an old hand at these matters. But how's the expense to be met?

Nestor Just a moment – I was coming to that. Have you an inheritance?

Harpalus A mere pittance.

Nestor After your reputation for nobility has been widely accepted, you'll easily find fools to trust you. Some will be scared of you and afraid to refuse you credit. Now there are a thousand ways to cheat your creditors.²⁶

Harpalus Indeed I'm not unfamiliar with them. But creditors will press me at last when they find out that all I possess is mere talk.

Nestor On the contrary, there's no easier path to a kingdom than to be in debt to as many people as possible.²⁷

35 **Harpalus** How so?

Nestor In the first place, the creditor treats you with respect, as if obliged for some great favour; and he's fearful of providing an occasion²⁸ that may cause him to lose his money. No servants so fawning as a debtor's creditors.

40 If you pay them something once in a while, they're more pleased than if you gave them a present.

Harpalus I've noticed that.

Nestor But see that you shun poor men, for they make a tremendous fuss over a trifling sum. People who are better off are easier to get along with. Shame checks them, hope dupes them, fear deters them – they know what
 5 knights are capable of! Last of all, when you're simply head over heels in debt, find an excuse to move to some other town, and then another, and so on. There's nothing in this to embarrass you. No men are more deeply in debt than great princes.²⁹ If some country fellow should press you for payment, pretend to be insulted by his impudence. Give him something now
 10 and then, but don't pay in full and don't pay everybody. Wherever you are, make sure no one suspects your pockets are absolutely empty. Always show off.

Harpalus Show what – when you're broke?

Nestor If a friend has left anything in your keeping, display it as your own,
 15 but do so cleverly – mere coincidence, you know! For this purpose borrow money occasionally and repay it promptly. From a purse bulging with brass coins, bring out the two gold pieces you keep there – guess the rest for yourself.

Harpalus I understand. But in the end I'm sure to be ruined by debt.

20 **Nestor** You know how much knights are indulged in our society.

Harpalus A great deal, and they get away with it, too.

Nestor And then keep servants who aren't slow off the mark or close relations who in any event have to be supported. A trader will turn up whom they can waylay and rob.³⁰ They'll find something unguarded in inns
 25 or dwellings or ships. Get it? Let them remember man wasn't given fingers for nothing.

Harpalus Provided it could be done safely –

Nestor See that they're decked out handsomely in livery. Entrust them with faked letters to eminent people. If your servants steal something on the sly,
 30 nobody will dare to accuse them even if suspicious, for fear of the knight their master. But if they win any loot by force, it will be called the spoils of war. These are training exercises for war.³¹

Harpalus Good advice.

Nestor Now the fundamental principle of knighthood must always be
 35 maintained: that for a knight to relieve a common traveller of his money is just and right. What's more outrageous than for a vulgar trader to be rich while a knight hasn't enough to spend on whores and dice? Always attach yourself to the most important people; or rather, force yourself upon them. Stop at nothing. Put on a bold front,³² especially with strangers, and to that
 40 end you will be wise to spend your time in some well-known spot, say the baths or the most popular inns.

Harpalus I've already thought of that.

Nestor In this respect, fortune often throws a prize in your way.

Harpalus How so, I beg you?

Nestor Suppose so and so has left his purse or absent-mindedly left behind
5 the key to his storeroom. You know the rest.

Harpalus But –

Nestor What are you afraid of? Who will dare suspect one of your bearing,
one of such haughty speech, the Knight of the Golden Rock? And if anyone
so shameless does turn up, who will have the nerve to accuse you? Suspicion
10 will be diverted meanwhile to some guest who left the day before. Have
your retinue of servants start a row with the innkeeper. Play your role
calmly. If a modest, good-hearted man is robbed, he'll keep quiet about it
for fear of incurring disgrace as well as financial loss by his carelessness in
guarding his property.

15 **Harpalus** What you say makes sense. – You know the Count of the White
Vulture, I imagine?

Nestor Of course.

Harpalus As I heard the story, he entertained a certain Spaniard, a
gentleman in dress and livery, who stole six hundred florins; and the count
20 never dared to complain, so high and mighty was the fellow.

Nestor There's an example for you! From time to time send one of your
servants off to war, of course. By robbing whatever churches and monasteries
he comes to, he'll return loaded down with the spoils of war.³³

Harpalus Yes, that's perfectly safe.

25 **Nestor** And there's another way of getting money, too.

Harpalus Tell me, please.

Nestor Drum up some excuses for quarrelling with those who are well off,
especially with monks or priests, who nowadays have almost everybody's
ill will. One of them scorned your coat of arms or spat on it;³⁴ another spoke
30 insultingly of you; another scribbled something that could be represented as
an insult. Through your ambassador declare irreconcilable war³⁵ on them.
Scatter dire threats of execution, destruction, total war.³⁶ Terrified, they'll sue
for peace. At this juncture, put a high price on your dignity; that is, ask an
unconscionable indemnity, in order to win a reasonable one. If you demand
35 three thousand guilders, the other side will be ashamed to offer less than
two hundred.

Harpalus The rest I'll threaten with law suits.

Nestor That comes a bit close to slander. Still, it does help here somewhat.
But look, Harpalus, I almost forgot what I should have mentioned at the
40 outset: you must lure some well-dowered girl into the snare of matrimony.
You've a love charm: you're a young, fair, engaging, good-humoured

good-for-nothing with a winning smile. Spread the word that you've been received with large promises at the emperor's court. Girls love to marry bigwigs.

5 **Harpalus** I know men for whom this worked well. But what if the bubble finally bursts and creditors spring at me from all sides? I'll be laughed at for posing as a knight, a crime worse than robbing a church – in the opinion of that set.

Nestor Here's where you must remember to put on a bold face.³⁷ Above all, bear in mind that insolence has never passed more readily for wisdom than it
10 does today. You must devise something you can put forward as an excuse. And there'll be no lack of innocents to believe your story. Some of the more polite will pretend they don't know it's a dodge. Finally, if nothing else will do, you must run off to a war somewhere, into the roar of battle. As 'the sea washes away all the sins of mankind,'³⁸ so war covers over the dregs of every crime.
15 A general isn't considered competent nowadays unless trained for his present rank by such preliminary campaigning.³⁹ This will be the final resort if all else fails. But you should leave no stone unturned⁴⁰ before matters come to this pass. Don't let your guard down. Steer clear of little towns where you can't even break wind without people's knowing it. In large and crowded cities
20 (unless it's one like Marseilles)⁴¹ there's more freedom. Find out on the sly what's being said about you. When you learn that remarks of this kind grow common: 'What's he doing? Why does he hang around here so many years? Why doesn't he go back to his own country? Why does he neglect his castles? What's his family tree? Where does he get the money from for such lavish
25 spending?' – when, I say, remarks of this sort begin to spread, then you must think of moving out promptly.⁴² But go out like a lion, not a hare.⁴³ Pretend you're summoned to the emperor's court on urgent business, that you'll soon be with the army. Those who have anything to lose won't dare mutter against you in your absence. But above all I advise you to beware of that irritable
30 and ill-humoured breed of men, the poets. They spill their malice on paper, and whatever they put down is quickly scattered throughout the world.⁴⁴

Harpalus Damned if your advice doesn't please me tremendously. I'll give you to understand you've met with an apt pupil and a young man who's far from ungrateful. The first good horse I find at pasture I'll send to you with
35 my compliments.

Nestor Now it's your turn to carry out your promise. What is it that attracts you so very much to a spurious reputation for knighthood?

Harpalus Simply that knights do as they please and get away with it.⁴⁵ Or does this seem a trivial matter to you?

40 **Nestor** Should the worst happen, you owe Nature one death, even if you've lived in the Chartreuse.⁴⁶ And men who die on the wheel have an easier

death than those killed by the stone, gout, or paralysis. For the soldierly creed is that nothing survives a man but his corpse.

Harpalus My view exactly!

NOTES

- 1 Harpalus in Greek means 'greedy' or 'eagerly,' as in *Odyssey* 6.250. Nestor is the wise counsellor of the Greeks in the *Iliad*.
- 2 The word-play in the Latin – *emptitia* ... *ementita* 'by purchase ... faked' – cannot be reproduced in English. Spurious nobility was a 'plague' in Germany, according to Erasmus *Adagia* I ix 44.
- 3 The theme of 'Things and Names'
- 4 In *De conscribendis epistolis* (1522) Erasmus proffers ironical advice on how to succeed as a courtier (LB I 448E–450A or III 1887E–1889A / ASD I-2 449–502 / CWE 25 195–7). Much is said there about cultivating the good will of the prince and how to look out for one's own advantage; but although shrewd – Samuel Pepys thought this 'letter' to be 'most true and good' (see CWE 26 195 n6 page 544) – the discourse is less lively and entertaining than this colloquy.
- 5 To impress the world as a Junker he must act and talk like a soldier and a gallant (*Adagia* I ix 44).
- 6 For 'clothes make the man,' a trite saying, but endorsed by Quintilian (8 prooemium 20) who, Erasmus surmises, had in mind some lines in the Nausicaa episode in the *Odyssey* (6.25–30, 242–3). See *Adagia* III i 60.
- 7 Thick twilled cotton cloth
- 8 For other examples of slashed doublet and hose, see 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 330:1–2 and n1 and 'Cyclops' 865:18; cf also 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 480:3–15. 'Slash' here is *disseca*, which fits cap, doublet, and hose, but Erasmus allows it to apply to nails too. 'Cut your nails,' he means, 'don't go around with untrimmed nails.'
- 9 One line of the house of Nassau settled in the Netherlands in the fifteenth century. From it descended William the Silent, founder of the Dutch republic. The title of the 1516 edition of Erasmus' *Panegyricus* (1504), as printed in LB IV 507, mentions the count of Nassau; other allusions to him occur in Allen Epp 829:12 (1518) and 1192:79 (1521) / CWE Epp 829:14–15 and 1192:90–1, when Henry count of Nassau was governor of Holland and Zeeland.
- 10 Cf 'Inns' 374:13–15
- 11 Since cap, doublet, and breeches are slashed, the helmet should be like them in this respect.
- 12 Proverbial (*Adagia* IV vi 99). Drooping ears may be commonplace, unsuitable for energetic creatures such as Harpalus, but he is mistaken in supposing that two horns would be better. For 'before this, I thought you had horns' was said of those formerly considered brave but when tested were found to be cowards (*Adagia* III iii 12).
- 13 Mythical monsters, half bird and half woman. See 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin' n21. A pun on 'Harpalus' may also be intended.
- 14 The lines that follow, on assuming an aristocratic name and concealing low birth in an obscure village, are adapted from *Adagia* I ix 44; see the introduction

above. In this and other passages Erasmus makes derisory comments on Eppendorf's other affectations: his helmet with its 'windows,' his shield (decorated with a sword across it), which he hangs up in the courtyard of the inn where he stays. These particulars are found again in a letter of February 1528 where Erasmus complains that Eppendorf had talked incessantly about his paternal estates and that his servants always addressed him as a noble (Allen Ep 1934:102-3, 130-5). Boasting and loud assertiveness were characteristic of Thraso. Erasmus often refers to Eppendorf as a Thraso or as thrasonical (six times in Ep 1934).

- 15 Suggestive of κώμη 'village.' Cf *Adagia* IV i 2 LB II 970F; *Moriae encomium* LB IV 410A / ASD IV-3 78:112-15 / CWE 27 89. Eppendorf signs himself 'Equ' (*equus* 'knight'); *Adagia* I ix 44 and Allen Ep 1934:100-2.
- 16 But Eppendorf's name, Erasmus conjectures, came from a tavern kept by his forebears (Allen Ep 1934:102-11; 360-3).
- 17 King of Germany and from 1493 to 1519 Holy Roman Emperor. See 'The Fabulous Feast' n51.
- 18 Philip the Handsome (d 1506), duke of Burgundy and archduke of Austria, son of Maximilian and father of Charles
- 19 The emperor Charles v. These three monarchs are named together in 'The Epithalamium' 523:7.
- 20 *Adagia* I iv 32; leave everything to chance or fortune. The motto is a variation of the words uttered by Julius Caesar when he finally began to cross the river Rubicon and invade Italy in 49 BC to oppose Pompey and the Roman senate (Suetonius *Julius* 32). Erasmus is taking an opportunity to call attention to Eppendorf's addiction to dicing, which he refers to also in *Adagia* I ix 44 and Allen Ep 1437:14 / CWE Ep 1437:16.
- 21 *Adagia* I ix 44; Allen Ep 1934:130-1
- 22 *scribendi* . . . *scabie*; cf Juvenal's *scribendi cacoethes* (7.52).
- 23 'Printers . . . have lost all sense of shame' (Allen Ep 1284:19-20 / CWE Ep 1284:20-1). See *Adagia* II i 1 LB II 404D.
- 24 Greek in the original and a pun. See ASD I-3 615:109.
- 25 Cf 'Things and Names' 814:23-7, another example of Erasmus' obsession with Eppendorf in the March 1529 edition of the *Colloquies*. All these marks of a Junker are named in *Adagia* I ix 44 except the 'French pox.' Erasmus does not say plainly that Eppendorf had the pox (syphilis), but that it was common in men of Eppendorf's kind was made sufficiently clear in 'A Marriage in Name Only.' In 1524 he writes that when in Freiburg (1520-2) Eppendorf spent his money on 'whores, wine, and dice,' adding that he ran up so many debts he does not dare to return (Allen Ep 1437:8-15).
- 26 For some examples see 'The Liar and the Man of Honour.'
- 27 The first part of Panurge's discourse on debtors and creditors in Rabelais *Gargantua and Pantagruel* 3.3 develops the ideas in the next few lines in a fine display of rhetoric.
- 28 Proverbial; *Adagia* I iv 4
- 29 See 'Things and Names' 813:39-41.
- 30 As a frequent traveller Erasmus was familiar with this peril and often alludes to it. Writing to Beatus Rhenanus from Louvain in March 1518, for example, he says he will go to Basel to work on the New Testament 'provided it is safe

to enter Germany, which with all these robberies is in a worse state than hell itself, for you can neither enter nor leave' (Allen Ep 796:14–17 / CWE 796:15–18). He blames the prevalence of robberies in Germany partly on the numerous political entities, partly on the cunning and covetousness of the robbers. Other lands, such as Switzerland, have the problem under better control (Allen Ep 1039:24–40 / CWE Ep 1039:24–42). He praises Henry VIII for suppressing robberies in England, 'from which no part of England was safe hitherto' (Allen Ep 964:51–2 / CWE Ep 964:56–8).

- 31 Cf 'Things and Names' 814:12–13. After these they stop at nothing (*Adagia* I ix 44, and see n39 below).
- 32 *perfricanda frons est*; proverbial (*Adagia* I viii 47)
- 33 Cf 'Military Affairs' 56:29–34.
- 34 Eppendorf is said by Erasmus to have been extremely sensitive to doubts or denials of his claims to nobility (Allen Ep 1934:94–105 and *passim*).
- 35 Greek in the original; *Adagia* III iii 84
- 36 Greek in the original; *Adagia* I x 27
- 37 *Adagia* I viii 47, as at n32 above.
- 38 Quoted in Greek in the original, from Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* 1193; *Adagia* III iv 9
- 39 See n31 above, and cf 'The Funeral' n46. The Germans, Erasmus had written in 1519, trained for war by engaging in robbery, and vice versa: when the war ended, they then used what they learned there. That is why fraud, theft, and double-dealing abound: they are profitable (Allen Ep 1039:24–32 / CWE Ep 1039:24–34).
- 40 Proverbial; *Adagia* I iv 30
- 41 Cf *Adagia* II iii 98. Athenaeus 12.523 says that the inhabitants were effeminate, but an allusion to the city in Plautus *Casina* 963 is interpreted by Erasmus as implying the opposite – that Marseilles was a place of strict morals and manners (and so in *Spongia* LB x 1667F). This interpretation fits the context here. Erasmus points out, however, that more than one ancient place was confused with the French Marseilles (Massilia).
- 42 Cf Allen Ep 1934:435–47, 1992:43–9.
- 43 *leonina, non leporina*. Again, the word-play is impossible to reproduce in English.
- 44 There are several echoes of Horace in these lines. See Ep 2.2.102 (also quoted in *Adagia* I ix 28), *Satires* 1.14.36–8, 85, 91.
- 45 Cf 885:20–1 above and 'Things and Names' 814:2.
- 46 That is, in austerity. For Erasmus' opinions of the Carthusians see the introduction to 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 328–9.

KNUCKLEBONES, OR THE GAME OF TALI

Ἀστραγαλισμός, *sive Talorum lusus*

First printed in the *Colloquia* in the March 1529 edition. On the date see the introduction to 'Charon' 818–19.

Erasmus' attention to sports and recreations, evident in the *Colloquies* as in other writings (see 'Sport' and Ep 55), was a natural consequence of his concern with youth, education, history, and classical scholarship. The game he describes here with such ample learning – antiquarianism of a kind popular and respected in books for the 'general reader' of his day – was one of several varieties of games of chance used by the ancients. Eros and Ganymede played with golden knucklebones on Olympus (Apollonius of Rhodes *Argonautica* 3.111–30). Patroclus killed a youth in an argument over knucklebones (*Iliad* 23.87–8). A picture from the first century of the Christian era shows women playing this game (reproduced in André Malraux *Voices of Silence* trans Stuart Gilbert [New York 1953] 40). In Pieter Brueghel's well-known painting *Children's Games*, this is one of the recreations shown (lower left-hand corner), and of course it is included in Rabelais' catalogue of games in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* 1.22.

Knucklebones (ἀστραγάλοι, also known as hucklebones), though often made of ivory, were originally the tarsal joints of certain animals, corresponding to the *tali* or ankle joints of man in form or structure. In the game described here each side of the *talus* was assigned a different value, 1, 3, 4, and 6. The highest number won by a throw of a single *talus* was therefore six, but in the game of knucklebones the highest score when four *tali* (as customary) were cast was made when each of the four sides showed a different number, as the dialogue explains.

Mere description of a game is not enough for Erasmus. The colloquy opens with a semantic query, which in turn leads to etymologies, quotations of classical texts, and a demonstration of the game, all presented in the author's usual informal but instructive fashion. As the text makes clear, his exposition is based on Aristotle's *Historia animalium* and *De partibus animalium*, but he knew all the other relevant passages in classical literature as well as some more recent ones, such as those by Theodorus Gaza (1400–c 1476), an erudite Greek who became professor at Ferrara and taught later at Rome and Naples. And Erasmus could not have overlooked a still more recent account of *tali* by Niccolò Leonico Tomeo (Leonicus Thomaeus), a highly regarded humanist scholar of Padua and Venice, where Erasmus may have met him. On his

esteem for Leonico see Allen Epp 2347:1–2, 2443:387–9, 2526:18–21. In *De ludo talari*, one of his *Dialogi* (Venice 1524), Leonico describes the same features of *tali* that we read of in Erasmus' colloquy. What is more, he cites or quotes the same passages from Aristotle's treatises, Persius, Martial, Suetonius, Lucian, Julius Pollux, and Theodorus Gaza as those found in Erasmus' dialogue. Once these similarities are brought to our attention (as they were very briefly, by E. Garin 'Noterella Erasmania' *La Rinascita* 5 [1942] 332–4), there can be no doubt of Erasmus' indebtedness. His library contained a copy of Leonico's *Dialogi* (Husner in *Gedenkschrift* 243 no 366). On Leonico see CEBR.

CHARLES,¹ QUIRINUS²

Quirinus 'Learn,' says Cato, 'but from the learned.'³ So, my dear Uutenhove, I wish to learn from you, a master, why bishops of the ancient church ordained that clerics should wear 'talarian,' that is ankle-length, gowns.⁴

Charles For two reasons, I think. First, for the sake of decency, lest any nakedness be exposed to view. In early days the sort of hose that now covers the body from waist to toetips hadn't been invented, nor were breeches or drawers commonly worn.⁵ Likewise is it shameful for women to wear clothes shorter than becomes the modesty of their sex. The second reason was that in dress as well as in conduct clerics should differ from laity, amongst whom the most ungodly delight to wear the shortest gowns.

Quirinus What you say is not improbable. But from Aristotle and Pliny I've learned that human beings don't have knucklebones [*tali*]. Only quadrupeds have them; not all quadrupeds, however, but very many of the cloven-hoofed ones, though only in their hind legs.⁶ How then can a garment worn by men be called 'talarian' unless men were once quadrupeds – as in the tale told by Aristophanes?⁷

Charles Oh, if we believe Oedipus, four-footed and three-footed as well as two-footed men are found.⁸ Often they come back from the wars with one foot, sometimes with none. But as for the word knucklebone [*talus*], you'll have more reason to be surprised if you read Horace, who credited even plays with knucklebones. For so he writes in the *Art of Poetry*, I believe: 'Heedless whether the play falls or stands straight on its feet [*talo*].'⁹

Quirinus Poets are privileged to talk as they please. According to them Tmolus has ears,¹⁰ ships speak,¹¹ and oak trees dance.¹²

Charles Why, your Aristotle could have taught you that there are hemi-astragals, which he calls ἡμιστράγαλοι; the lynx has this type, he informs us.¹³ Lions, he adds, have something in place of a *talus*, only crooked, which he terms 'labyrinthine'; Pliny renders it 'twisted.'¹⁴ In fact, wherever

bones are joined together to make bending easy, concave ones fit convex; these are protected on each side by a slippery cartilage and have their parts coated, so to speak, to prevent injury from friction, as Aristotle likewise teaches.¹⁵ In these joints there is usually something similar to a knucklebone
 5 in form and function; as for example at the bottom of the shinbone, next to the heel, where the whole foot bends, something like a *talus* protrudes – the Greeks call it *σφυρόν* [ankle].¹⁶ Again, in the bending of the knee, which if I mistake not they call *ἰσχίον* and some call *vertebrum*.¹⁷ We see something similar in hipbones and shoulderbones; last of all in the joints
 10 of fingers and toes. Lest this surprise you, the Greeks relate that the word *ἀστράγαλος* is applied by approved authors even to the bones to which the spine is attached, especially in the neck. And they cite this verse: ‘My neck was severed from the spine [*ἀσπραγάλων*].’¹⁸

Now Aristotle tells us that an animal’s forelegs are given to it for
 15 speed and for that reason have no *tali*; the hind ones for balance, because the weight of the body inclines to that part, and likewise for strength in those beasts that fight by kicking.¹⁹ Horace, when he wants to signify that a play was not hissed off the stage but played through to the end, says it stood up firm on its feet [*talo*];²⁰ attributing anklebones to a play in precisely the same
 20 manner that we credit a book with a ‘heel’ [*calx*]²¹ and a scroll with a ‘navel’ [*umbilicus*].²²

Quirinus Really, you do very well as a grammarian.

Charles But to be even more convincing: – Greek philologists would derive *ἀστράγαλος* from *στρέφω* [bend] and alpha privative,²³ because the
 25 knucklebone [*ἀστράγαλος*] scarcely bends at all but is stationary instead. Others, however, prefer the view that *ἀστράγαλος* is used for *ἀστάγαλος* [not standing], *ρ* being an interpolation; because the knucklebone, owing to its slippery roundness, can’t stand up.²⁴

Quirinus You could make a lot of guesses in that fashion. It would be
 30 simpler to say ‘I don’t know.’

Charles The conjecture won’t seem so unreasonable if you reflect on the obscurity of word origins.²⁵ And then there’s no inconsistency in the matter, as will be evident if you examine it more closely. The knucklebone does turn round, but in such a way that it steadies the part to which it is attached.²⁶ In
 35 the second place, bone joins bone, to prevent easy dislocation.

Quirinus Seems to me you’d make a good sophist if you liked.

Charles But there’s no reason why the etymology of the word should bother us, Talesius. For what the Greeks today call *ἀστράγαλος* the ancients – Callimachus, for instance²⁷ – spoke of as *ἄστριον*; his hemistich has: ‘And
 40 ten dice [*ἄστρια*] took as ransom.’ From this it appears that they used to say *ἀσπρίζειν*²⁸ as well as *ἀσπραγάλιζειν* for ‘to play knucklebones.’

Quirinus Then what sort of thing is the *talus*, properly speaking?²⁹

Charles A girls' game nowadays;³⁰ once a boys' game, like cob-nuts.³¹ The Greeks have a saying about it, 'upset over knucklebones,' when they mean angry for a trivial reason.³² Again, Horace in the *Odes*: 'Nor shall you dice
5 for lordship of the feast.' Likewise in his *Satires*: 'Dice and nuts, Aulus,' etc.³³ Finally, there's that aphorism of the Lacedaemonian, I believe, about tricking boys by knucklebones, men by oaths.³⁴

This *talus*, they say, is not found in any animal that is solid-hoofed, except the single-horned rhinoceros,³⁵ or that has the foot split into many
10 toes or claws.³⁶ The lion, panther, dog, ape, man, birds, and many other creatures belong to this class. Most of the truly δίχθηλα or cloven-hoofed have the *talus*, and, as you correctly remarked, on the hind legs.³⁷ Man is unique in having a double reason for being without the *talus*: first, because he is a biped, secondly because he has feet split by five toes.

Quirinus I've often heard about that. But I'd like very much a description of the shape and location of the *talus*. For this sort of game is scorned even by girls today; they take up dice, cards, and other masculine amusements instead.

Charles No wonder, since they take up theology, too.³⁸ But even if I were
20 a mathematician or painter or sculptor, I couldn't show you the shape of a *talus* better than by a *talus* itself, unless you prefer that I describe it in words, as is generally done.

Quirinus Have you a *talus*?

Charles Here you are: a sheep's bone from the right leg. Only four sides,³⁹
25 you see, though a cube and a die have six: four on the sides, two on top and bottom.

Quirinus That's right.

Charles On a *talus*, since top and bottom are rounded, there are only four sides, one of which, you notice, has a sort of hump.

Quirinus I see.

Charles The side directly opposite is concave. Aristotle calls the former 'prone,' the latter 'supine';⁴⁰ as in sexual intercourse between husband and wife for the purpose of begetting children the woman is supine, the man prone; and if the palm of the hand faces the ground, it's prone; if reversed,
35 supine. (Poets and orators sometimes misuse these terms, but that doesn't concern us just now.)

Quirinus You've given a fine demonstration indeed. What's the difference between the two remaining sides?

Charles One is somewhat concave, in order to fit the bone to which it's
40 joined. The other is hardly concave at all and is less protected by a coating of cartilage; it's covered only by tendon and skin.



Children's Games, detail: girls playing knucklebones
Pieter Bruegel the Elder, 1560
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Quirinus I see.

Charles The prone side has no tendons, but a tendon sticks to the hollow of the supine side, as to the top of the right side and the bottom of the left.

Quirinus Very good, but how am I to tell right from left?

- 5 **Charles** You do well to remind me, for I've taught you badly if you don't understand that this *talus* comes from the right leg. I'll explain it better, then, and at the same time point out its location, as you wish. The *talus* is actually in the hock of the leg, below the hipbone.

Quirinus Many people think it's next to the foot.

- 10 **Charles** They're mistaken. What is properly called the *talus* is in the hocks, which the Greeks name *καμπαί* [bendings],⁴¹ but of the hind legs, as I've said. Between your foot and knee is the shin.

Quirinus So I believe.

Charles Behind the knee is the *καμπή*.

- 15 **Quirinus** I agree.

Charles The bending that a man has in his arms, quadrupeds have in the hind legs. (I except the ape, a half-man.) Thus elbow is to arms what knee is to legs.⁴²

Quirinus I see.

- 20 **Charles** So bending corresponds to bending.

Quirinus And this applies, you say, to the front and hind legs.

- Charles** Correct. In the hock, therefore, corresponding to the one behind the knee, the *talus* stands straight up when the animal stands.⁴³ Top and bottom curve slightly, though not exactly in the same way, for the upper is bent
25 back into horns that Aristotle calls *κεραίαι*⁴⁴ (Theodorus renders *antennae*); the prone side lies under these where they are joined to it. The bottom has nothing of this kind.

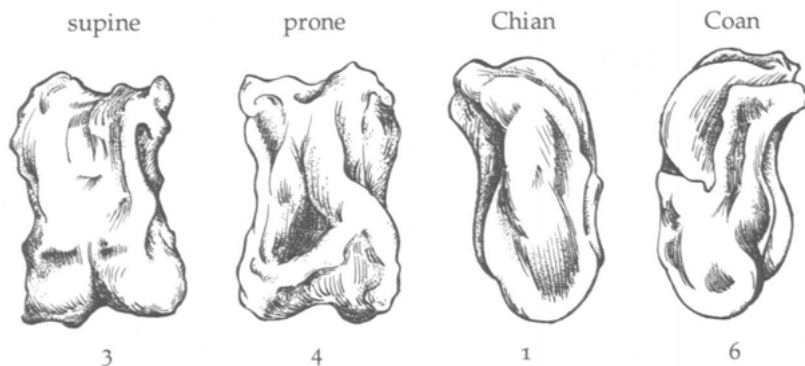
Quirinus I quite understand.

- Charles** Hence the side facing the forelegs Aristotle calls supine; the one
30 opposite this, prone. Also there are two sides, one of which faces inward, that is, it faces the hind legs – either right or left, let's say; the other faces outward. The one facing inward Aristotle calls *κῶλον*; the one facing outward, *ισχίον*.

- Quirinus** I see the thing exactly with my eyes. Now it remains for you
35 to describe the old method of playing knucklebones; for the game of our recollection doesn't agree with what we find in ancient writers on this kind of play.⁴⁵

- Charles** But surely it's possible that just as we use cards and dice for various sorts of play nowadays, the ancients had different ways of playing
40 knucklebones.

Quirinus That's probable.



The four sides of the knucklebone

Charles Theodorus Gaza (or, as others prefer to call him, Theodorus of Thessalonika),⁴⁶ in his translation of book 2 of Aristotle's *History of Animals*, says the side of the *talus* turned outward is called the 'dog'; the side turned inward, towards the other shank, 'Venus.' But the fact is he adds this on
5 his own authority, for Aristotle says only: '... the prone side faces out, the supine side faces in, and the sides called κῶλα turned in towards one another, those called ἰσχία outside, and the "horns" on top.'⁴⁷ But since it's certain from other authors that the throw is called 'Venus' whenever no two of the four *tali* show the same number, I wonder what source Theodorus followed
10 in calling one side 'Venus.' Our common friend Erasmus – no expert on such subjects, to be sure – gives in his *Adagia* some information from ancient authors about the game of knucklebones. For instance, in the proverb 'Not Chius but Cous' he tells us that *Cous* and *senio* are the same thing the Greeks call ἐξίτης [sice]. Likewise in the proverb 'Chius to Cous,' where he adds that
15 Chius is the same as 'dog' and that the throw of 'Cous' was lucky, of 'dog' unlucky;⁴⁸ as Persius testifies:

My sole question was to know
What the lucky sice would bring, how much
20 The unlucky 'dog' would strip me of.⁴⁹

Similarly Propertius:

Always the ruinous 'dogs' leaped up.⁵⁰

Ovid too, in book 2 of *Tristia*, called them 'ruinous dogs.'⁵¹ Erasmus adds from Martial that sice by itself was lucky, but unlucky if accompanied by 'dog.' For Martial says:

Nor sice with ace shakes my ivory box.⁵²

Martial indicates in his *Apophoreta* that the throw of 'Venus' was rare but was the luckiest:⁵³

5

When no one *talus* stands with the same face as another,
You'll say I've given you generous gifts.⁵⁴

As many knucklebones were used in play as each *talus* has sides; in dicing, no
10 more than three as a rule. But the method of play is made more clear by what
Suetonius writes in *Octavius Augustus*, quoting the following from a letter
of Augustus to Tiberius: 'At dinner, both yesterday and today, we gambled
like old men.'⁵⁵ For when the *tali* were thrown, whoever cast "dog" or sice
paid a denarius for each *talus*; whoever threw "Venus" won them all.⁵⁶

15 **Quirinus** You've explained that the throw is luckiest when all four *tali* show
different sides, just as in dicing the one called 'Midas' is luckiest;⁵⁷ but why
this throw is called 'Venus' you haven't explained yet.

Charles Lucian will solve that difficulty for you. In his *Amores* he says: '...
and with luck at play, especially if he made the lucky throw of the goddess,
20 when no two sides of the knucklebones show the same number, he gave
thanks, in expectation of soon attaining his desire.' Now here he's speaking
of 'Venus.'⁵⁸

Quirinus If Theodorus is wrong, only two sides have names of their own.

Charles He may have followed some source that eludes us. The literary
25 evidence I've presented. Some writers mention a number, 'Stesichorian',⁵⁹
which they think is an eight in knucklebones; also 'Euripidean',⁶⁰ which
amounted to forty.

Quirinus It remains for you to lay down the rules of the game.⁶¹

Charles I don't think boys used those same rules that Octavius writes he
30 used. And it's unlikely that the sort of playing he mentions was popular.
Had it been so, he needed to say merely 'At dinner we played knucklebones.'
But he seems to me to suggest they had found a new mode of playing – one
suitable for old men, as it were, and with very few of the exacting intellectual
demands that make so many games more laborious than studies these days.

35 **Quirinus** Bring out the rest of the knucklebones, please, so we can try them.

Charles But we've no dice-box for rolling the *tali*,⁶² and no board either.

Quirinus This table will serve for giving some sort of demonstration. A
glass or a cap will do for a dice-box.

Charles Even enclosing them in the hollow of your hands will do. The throw
40 turns up the supine side more often than the prone and the prone more often
than sice or 'dog.'

Quirinus Evidently.

Charles If one 'dog' turns up among four knucklebones, put down a coin; if two, two coins; if three, three; if four, four.⁶³ And every time you throw sice, take up one of the coins.

5 **Quirinus** What if I throw sice and 'dog'?

Charles If you like, each player will add a coin; neither will take anything. Whoever is the first to get 'Venus' will win the stakes.

Quirinus What if the *talus* shows the prone or supine side?

Charles That throw won't count, and either you'll have to throw again or it
10 will be my turn.

Quirinus I agree to its being your turn.

Charles Now lay down your stake.

Quirinus Let's try without a penalty.

Charles You want to learn so great an art for nothing?

15 **Quirinus** Still, it's not fair to match a novice with an expert.

Charles But hope of winning and fear of losing will make you try all the harder.

Quirinus How much shall we play for?

Charles If you want to get rich in a hurry, a hundred ducats.

20 **Quirinus** I only wish I had them to put down! It's safer to grow rich by degrees. Here's a whole farthing.

Charles Come, we'll add little to little, as Hesiod advises, and thus accumulate a large sum.⁶⁴ Roll them and throw. A good start! You have a 'dog.' Lay down a coin, and hereafter recognize the unlucky side. Give me
25 the *tali*.

Quirinus A better start! You've three 'dogs.' Lay down the coins.

Charles Fortune has something in store for you. Throw; but be sure to shake them first, my good friend. – Work's wasted: you've the prone and supine sides. My turn; hand me the *tali*.

30 **Quirinus** Oh, well done! I see three 'dogs' again.

Charles Don't crow too soon.⁶⁵ Fortune does beckon to you, I say. But look: this was the way I was taught the game, but I think Octavius played it differently.

Quirinus How?

35 **Charles** Whoever had thrown 'dog' laid down a denarius, as we said; whoever threw sice won nothing, but the other player laid down.

Quirinus What if many sices turned up?

Charles The other player added as many coins. The first throw of 'Venus' won the rather sizable stakes. And you may add that the player who gets
40 neither sice nor 'dog' loses nothing but his turn at throwing.

Quirinus I don't decline.

Charles And it's nicer, I think, if the one with the *tali* has three throws and then gives the other his turns.

Quirinus All right, but how many throws of 'Venus' will end the game?

Charles Three, if that suits you; then you'll be free to start over again.

- 5 **Though Venus' favours are few and far between. Let's play now and hope for good luck.**

Quirinus Go ahead. But it's best to shut the doors, so our cook won't see us playing like children.

Charles Like dotards, rather. Have you such a blab of a cook?

- 10 **Quirinus** So loose-tongued that if there were no men to whom she could tell what happens at home, she'd spin a long yarn to the hens and cats.⁶⁶

Charles Ho there, boy, shut and bolt the door, to keep some spectator from popping in without notice. Then we can play to our heart's content.

NOTES

- 1 Charles is undoubtedly named for Karel Uutenhove of Ghent, who lived with Erasmus in Basel for at least six months (July 1528 to January 1529) as a student. Erasmus dedicated to him an edition of some minor writings by Chrysostom in February 1529 (Allen Ep 2093).
- 2 Quirinus Talesius was in Erasmus' service for about seven years (1524–31). Afterwards he returned to his native Haarlem and became a leading citizen, serving as burgomaster ten times. He perished in the Spanish siege of the town in 1572 (see Allen Ep 1966 introduction). Erasmus thought well of him, for in the month this colloquy was published he gave Talesius a present of 150 crowns. His first will provided a bequest of 200 florins for him 'if he is alive at the time of my death' (Allen Ep 2113 introduction; Allen VI 506:124–5 Appendix 19). He is not to be confused with Quirinus Hagius, Erasmus' secretary a few years later (Allen Ep 2704 introduction). On both consult CEBR.
- 3 *Disticha Catonis* 4.23 (ed Marcus Boas [Amsterdam 1952] 219); and see *Adagia* IV viii 37. On the *Disticha* ascribed to Cato see 'Patterns' n2.
- 4 A convenient pun on Quirinus' nickname, Talesius ('spinner,' 'clothmaker,' his father's trade). The Fifth Lateran Council in 1514 affirmed the ancient rule that priests' garments (the black cassock) should be ankle length ([Bull on the reform of the curia] On cardinals; Tanner I 619).
- 5 On the terms for these garments see 'Cyclops' n12.
- 6 Aristotle *De partibus animalium* 4.10 690a4–27; *Historia animalium* 2.1 499b6–27; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 11.255
- 7 See Plato *Symposium* 189–90.
- 8 A reference to the riddle of the Sphinx; see 'The Profane Feast' n71.
- 9 Not in the *Ars poetica* but in his *Epistles* 2.1.176
- 10 Mountain in Lydia and god of the mountain, who 'shook his ears free from the trees' when about to judge a musical contest between Pan and Apollo (Ovid *Metamorphoses* 11.156–61)

- 11 In the *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes, the ship *Argo* urges the pilot Tiphys and his comrades to set forth (1.524–5). In a more memorable passage the ship speaks again with human voice, prophesying woe (4.580–91).
- 12 They responded in this manner to the music of Orpheus' lyre (Horace *Odes* 1.12.11–12; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 10.86–105). Erasmus writes of an oak preaching when he jokes about a critic, Duchesne (de Quercu; cf *quercus* 'oak'). See 'Patterns' n35.
- 13 Aristotle *Historia animalium* 2.1 499b24–5
- 14 Aristotle *Historia animalium* 2.1 499b25–6; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 11.255. On 'labyrinthine' see also *Adagia* II x 51.
- 15 Aristotle *De partibus animalium* 2.9 (654b20–7)
- 16 On σφυρόν and ἰσχίον see Aristotle *Historia animalium* 1.15 (494a4–10).
- 17 Erasmus is mistaken here; the ἰσχίον is the hip joint, not the kneebone. *Vertebrum* is used in late medical writers for the hip joint, eg Caelius Aurelianus *Acutae passiones* 1.10.71.
- 18 Greek in the original, from Homer *Odyssey* 10.599–60, 11.64–5; quoted in the entry on ἀστράγαλος in *Etymologicon magnum* (on which see n24 below)
- 19 Aristotle *De partibus animalium* 4.10 (690a14–21)
- 20 See 892:22–4 and n9 above.
- 21 The *calx* or heel was the 'foot' of a page or conclusion of a book.
- 22 Rollers attached to the ends of ancient papyrus books had projecting knobs (*umbilici*) as ornaments. See Martial 4.89: *pervenimus usque ad umbilicos* 'we've come to the end.'
- 23 Alpha prefixed to a word beginning with a consonant may be used in Greek to create a negative.
- 24 These lines undoubtedly recall what Erasmus had read in the *Etymologicon magnum* (ed Thomas Gaisford [Oxford 1848] 159:40). On that work see 'The New Mother' n97.
- 25 On Erasmus and etymology see Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 252–9.
- 26 Cf *De partibus animalium* 4.10 690a4–21, where Aristotle calls it a 'connecting rod.'
- 27 Greek poet and scholar (fourth–third centuries BC). The line of verse quoted here is Greek in the original. Literally ἄστρια means 'little stars.' In writing ἄστρια Erasmus probably followed Suidas, which treats this diminutive as synonymous with ἀστράγαλος (ed A. Adler [Leipzig 1928–38; repr 1971] I part 1 no 4255, citing Callimachus). The *Etymologicon magnum* (n24 above) 159:28 and modern editions of Callimachus read ἄστριας; see *Callimachus and Lycophron* trans A.W. Mair, Loeb Classical Library (London and Cambridge, Mass 1921) fragment 84/238 and *Callimachus* ed R. Pfeiffer, 2 vols (Oxford 1949–53) fragment 276.
- 28 So Julius Pollux *Onomasticon* 9.99. This lexicographer (second century AD) is mentioned by Erasmus in Allen Ep 260:47–50 / CWE Ep 260:52–6 and *De ratione studii* ASD I-2 123:2–5 / CWE 24 674:5–8.
- 29 *Astragali* or *tali* used in knucklebones are small bones, oblong in shape, with two rounded ends and four more or less flat sides. Since they cannot rest on the rounded ends, it is only the four sides which counted in the game. These were numbered 1, 3, 4, 6. For further description see n40 below.

Allusions to the lore of dicing and *tali* are found in *Adagia*, for example I ii 13, II ii 9, II vii 68. For a contemporary description of knucklebones see the *Liber de ludo aleae* by the physician and mathematician Girolamo Cardano (1501–76) in *Cardano ed Oysten Ore*, with translation by S.H. Gould (Princeton 1953) 192–3, 237–9.

30 Known as ‘jacks’

31 On this game see ‘Hunting’ n6.

32 Erasmus quotes the Greek from Homer *Iliad* 23.88.

33 *Odes* 1.4.18; *Satires* 2.3.171–2

34 *Adagia* III iii 43; from Plutarch *Moralia* 229B *Apophthegmata Laconica*

35 The ‘Indian ass’; Aristotle *Historia animalium* 2.1 499b19–20

36 Aristotle *Historia animalium* 2.1 499b23–4; *De partibus animalium* 4.10 690a24–5

37 See 892:14–16 and n6 above.

38 See ‘The Abbot and the Learned Lady’ n36.

39 See n29 above.

40 Aristotle *Historia animalium* 2.1 499b. The illustration from sexual intercourse, however, is likely to be Erasmus’ own, perhaps suggested by some words in Theodorus Gaza.

The knucklebone sits in the hock of the animal. Its rounded top and bottom fit into sockets in the two bones which it joins. In these lines Erasmus is attempting the difficult task of explaining, in ordinary language, the precise position of the knucklebone in the leg. Aristotle had said that when the animal is standing, the astragal is upright; his account, however, implies that normally the astragal tilts slightly forward so that it is possible to speak of one side being ‘on top’ (prone) and the opposite side ‘underneath’ (supine). Of the other two sides one faces inwards (ie towards the other leg) and the other faces outwards. The prone side is described as ‘humped.’ It faces towards the back of the animal. Its value in the game was four. The opposite side (supine) is concave and faces towards the front legs of the animal. Its value is three. The side facing inward, known in the game as ‘the Coan,’ is slightly concave. It has the highest value, a six. The opposite side, which faces outwards, has the lowest value, namely, one. It was called ‘the Chian’ or the ‘dog.’ For further on these names see nn47, 48.

The writer of this note would like to thank Brady’s Belmont Butcher, in Queensland, Australia, and the much lamented Hecuba, a deer of Edenside, New Brunswick, for their contribution to the solution of several philological problems in Erasmus’ description of knucklebones.

41 Aristotle *Historia animalium* 2.1 499b27; see next note.

42 Erasmus here lacks his usual clarity. He is explaining that the knucklebone is not in the ankle, but in the hock, which has similar ‘bendings’ to the elbow and the knee. He goes on to make the point that the human elbow bends in the same direction as the hind leg of a quadruped. The front and the back legs of a quadruped bend in opposite directions, thus: « »». In humans the elbow has the same angle as the back leg of an animal and the knee resembles an animal’s front leg. There is much on this topic in Aristotle *De incessu animalium* 13 712a1–22. For the intermediate nature of the ape see Aristotle *De partibus animalium* 4.10 689b31–4.

43 Aristotle *Historia animalium* 2.1 499b26–7

- 44 Aristotle *Historia animalium* 2.1 499b29–30. Top and bottom of the knucklebone are rounded, but the top has two small projecting points or ‘horns,’ which stand over the ‘prone’ (‘humped’) side.
- 45 Here again we are reminded that later ways of scoring in knucklebones may differ from those used by the ancients. Cf Harold W. Johnston *The Private Life of the Romans* (Chicago 1932) 242–3.
- 46 See the introduction 891 above. His Greek grammar (Venice 1495) was considered by Erasmus and others to be the best. Erasmus translated books 1 and 2 of this (Louvain 1516, 1518; text in LB I 117–64); see Epp 428 and 771. Gaza’s Latin versions of Aristotle *Historia animalium* and *De partibus animalium* were printed in 1476 (Venice).
- 47 Erasmus quotes the Greek from *Historia animalium* 2.1 499b27–30. When Aristotle says that the prone side faces out, he means that it faces back; similarly the supine side faces in, ie towards the front of the animal.
κῶλα and ἰσχία are mistaken manuscript readings which Erasmus found in his text of Aristotle and copied here; they were left unchanged in his final authorized edition of March 1533, as in the *Opera omnia* of 1538–40 and LB. Neither Greek word makes sense in the context. Gaza saw that the correct readings should be κῶα and ἰχία, and Erasmus accepted these readings in the *Adagia*. See next note.
- 48 Two adages are referred to. The first (II ii 9) is given in the form ‘Not Chius but Cius,’ although Erasmus knew the correct variant Cous for Cius, which he cited from the ancient critic and scholar Aristarchus of Samothrace. In the second, ‘Chius to Cous’ (II vii 68), the two Greek terms are correctly explained as belonging to the game of knucklebones, where, as we have seen, ‘Chius’ stands for one and ‘Cous’ for sice or six. Sice was the luckiest number. But the luckiest throw (the ‘Venus’ throw) was when no two *tali* came up with the same number.
- 49 Persius 3.48.50
- 50 Propertius 4.8.46
- 51 *Tristia* 2.474, but see n60 below.
- 52 Martial 13.1.6
- 53 If you throw often enough, a proverb promises, you will sooner or later throw a ‘Venus’ (*Adagia* I ii 13; cf I iii 9).
- 54 Martial 14.14
- 55 Dotards sometimes revert to childishness, Erasmus observes (*Adagia* I v 36), but says that for them to indulge now and then in games of childhood is harmless and can be a sensible relaxation from serious affairs (Allen Ep 1402:13–17). Augustus is said to have played sometimes at cobnuts with children (*Augustus* 83). In Cicero *Ad Atticum* 1.16.3, *in ludo talari* refers to a gambling den; but the emperor’s game of knucklebones with his guests was merely an amusing and innocent way of passing the time.
- 56 This passage from *Augustus* 71 is quoted in *Adagia* I ii 13. Erasmus’ editions of Suetonius and of the *Historia Augusta* were printed together by Froben in 1518. The dedicatory letter to Dukes Frederick and George of Saxony (Ep 586) is an incisive essay on rulership.
- 57 On ‘Midas’ see *Adagia* II ix 87.
- 58 Lucian *Amores* 16. Erasmus quotes the Greek.
‘he gave thanks . . . his desire’] Added in the September 1529 edition

- 59 When the total was eight; so called because the tomb of the ancient Greek poet Stesichorus was octagonal in shape (Julius Pollux *Onomasticon* 9.100)
- 60 Here a nickname given to the cast of forty in dicing; from one Euripides (not the dramatist) who held office with the Forty in Athens. See Athenaeus 6.247a and Julius Pollux *Onomasticon* 9.101. The Forty were Athenian justices who heard cases of minor claims (Aristotle *Constitution of Athens* 53.1).
- 61 They are summarized in C. Daremberg and E. Saglio *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines* 5 vols in 9 (Paris 1877–1919) v 28–31, with illustrations.
- 62 Because of their irregular shapes *tali* could not easily be rolled or tossed from a box. We are told that boys would sometimes spin them like tops or spindles; these players enclose them in the hollow of their hands.
- 63 Four ‘dogs’ or aces would be the lowest score.
- 64 *Works and Days* 361–2; cf *Adagia* I viii 94.
- 65 Literally ‘No triumph song before the victory!’ a proverbial expression quoted here in Greek. See *Adagia* I vii 55.
- 66 Quirinus’ reply recalls Erasmus’ irrepressible servant Margarete Büsslin, whose namesake we met in ‘The Poetic Feast.’ See the introduction 390.

THE COUNCIL OF WOMEN

Senatulus, sive Γυναικοσυνέδριον

First printed in the *Colloquies* in the March 1529 edition. On the date of publication see the introduction to 'Charon' 818–19. A remark in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' (1105:31–4) seems to indicate that this colloquy was written earlier than 'The Knight without a Horse,' but in the printed versions 'The Knight without a Horse' comes first.

This diversion was inspired by remembrance of a passage in the life of the emperor Heliogabalus attributed to Aelius Lampridius and included in the *Historia Augusta* (*Heliogabalus* 4.3–4). It was mentioned by Erasmus in *Lingua* (1525; LB IV 731F / ASD IV-1A 146:979–87 / CWE 29 379). *Senatulus*, the 'little' or 'miniature' senate, a diminutive of Erasmus' devising, was obviously adapted from *senaculum*, a council-hall where matrons related to Roman emperors were formally honoured. Heliogabalus (or Elagabalus), who reigned from 218 until 222, established a women's 'senate' over which his mother Symiamira presided. This assembly presumed or pretended to enact rules about deportment and etiquette for ladies: dress, precedence, even the question of who might kiss whom, a topic sometimes thought by readers of Erasmus to be a peculiarly English subject. In Erasmus' dialogue similar concerns are propounded by Cornelia, a no-nonsense woman dedicated to advancing the status of her sex and at the same time keeping commoners in their places.

To make fun of feminine foibles was long the assumed prerogative of every male satirist. By allowing women to legislate – a motif as old as the *Ecclesiazusae* of Aristophanes – Erasmus is having a gentleman's joke. Yet he does more than that. Cornelia's strictures on the impertinence of the lower orders, who put on airs and boldly imitate their betters in dress and bearing, invite attention to the perennial question of inequality. This dialogue is an entertainment, not a contribution to social philosophy. Nevertheless it contains the germ of an idea, engagingly treated, about social and therefore political status or privilege. Like 'Courtship,' 'Marriage,' and 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady,' it pleases by comedy but at the same time invites reflection on social institutions.

For Erasmus' ideas on dress in general see 'The Well-to-do Beggars.' He took an interest in the essay *De re vestiaria* by Lazare de Baïf (Basel 1526), who discusses some of the matters noticed by Cornelia in the colloquy. Erasmus knew Baïf, thought well of him (Allen Ep 1479:1–18 / CWE Ep 1479:6–21, Allen Ep 1962:1–9; *Ciceronianus* LB I 1012A / ASD I-2 674:11–14 / CWE 28 421),

owned his book (Husner in *Gedenkschrift* 238 no 73), and praised it: Baïf, he says, has done for ancient dress what Budé did for ancient coinage in *De asse* (mentioned in 'Benefices' 48:35). Baïf was French ambassador in Venice 1529–34. On him see Allen Ep 1962 introduction and CEBR.

Some source books dealing with Renaissance women are cited in the notes. Three studies of particular value may be named here. Ruth Kelso *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana 1956), in addition to a skilful presentation of texts and doctrine, has a copious bibliography. An older work, E.P. Rodocanachi *La femme italienne avant, pendant, et après la Renaissance* (Paris 1922), is still very useful; it has many illustrations. Ian Maclean *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (Cambridge 1980) is a concise survey of what contemporary learning and thought held about women and how all this contributed to the emergence of modern feminism.

'The Council of Women' is the only Erasmian colloquy, so far as I know, to have been translated into Irish. A seventeenth-century version, 'Párliament na mBan,' dedicated to the translator's young pupil, is described, with quotations from the text, by James Stewart in *Celtica* 7 (1967) 135–41.

CORNELIA, MARGARET, PEROTTA, JULIA, CATHARINE

Cornelia Your full and prompt attendance at this meeting today – happy and auspicious¹ event may it prove for this group and the entire commonwealth
 5 of women! – gives me every hope that a gracious God may direct the mind of each one of you to what concerns the general welfare and the dignity of us all. You are all aware, I believe, of how much our interests have suffered from the fact that while men transact their business at daily assemblies, we neglect our cause by sitting at distaff and loom. Hence matters have come
 10 to such a pass that we are entirely ignorant of political science; men treat us virtually as amusements and scarcely think us deserving of the name of human. If we go on like this, figure out for yourselves how it will end, for I'm afraid to utter such ominous words. Though we may neglect our social position, we should at least be concerned about our security. 'In the
 15 multitude of counsellors there is safety,' wrote the wisest of kings.² Bishops have their synods, congregations of monks their chapters, soldiers their assigned stations, thieves their rendezvous. And, to make the list complete, even ants have their assemblies. Of all living creatures, only we women never have intercourse –

20 **Margaret** Oftener than we should!

Cornelia – It's not yet time to interrupt. Let me finish my speech; then each one will have a chance to talk. We're not introducing a novelty; we're

recalling precedent. Since, more than thirteen hundred years ago, if I'm not mistaken, that most revered emperor Heliogabalus –

Perotta 'Most revered?' How come, when we know he's the one who was dragged along by a hook and thrown into a sewer?³

- 5 **Cornelia** Interrupted again! If we approve or disapprove of a person on this basis, we shall call Christ bad because he was crucified, Domitian good because he died at home.⁴ But the worst charge against Heliogabalus is that he hurled to the ground the sacred fire kept by the vestal virgins⁵ and that in his domestic chapel he kept images of Moses and Christ,⁶ whom they
10 disparagingly called 'Chrestus.'⁷ Well, this Heliogabalus decreed that as the emperor had his senate with which to deliberate about public affairs, so also his mother Augusta should have a senate of her own for dealing with women's business.⁸ Either as a joke, or else to distinguish it, men called this the 'petty senate.'

- 15 This precedent, abandoned for so many centuries, our situation has long warned us to restore. And let no one be upset because the apostle Paul forbids women to speak in the assembly he calls a church.⁹ He refers to a meeting of men; this is a feminine meeting. Otherwise, if women always had to keep silence, why did nature give us, too, tongues as ready as men's
20 and voices just as loud – though men sound hoarser and more like donkeys than we do. But we must all take care to treat this business so seriously that men won't speak of the 'petty senate' again or maybe think up some nastier name, since they're accustomed to making fun of us whenever they please. Yet if *their* parliaments were described as they deserve, they might seem
25 worse than womanish. We see monarchs who have done nothing but make war for many a year now; theologians, priests, bishops, and people never agree together; there are as many opinions as there are men,¹⁰ and among these men a more than feminine fickleness. There's no peace between state and state, neighbour and neighbour.¹¹ Unless I'm much mistaken, human
30 affairs would go better if the reins were handed over to us. Perhaps feminine modesty forbids me to accuse such leading citizens of stupidity, but I dare say one's allowed to repeat what Solomon wrote in the thirteenth chapter of Proverbs: 'Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.'¹²

- 35 But I must not allow this prologue to delay you any longer. That everything may be done decently and in order, without disturbance, let us consider first who should attend the council and who should be excluded. Too large a crowd means an uproar rather than a council; and a group limited to a few smacks of dictatorship. I'm of the opinion that no virgins should be
40 admitted, because many things will come up that are not proper for them to hear.

Julia But how could you identify the virgins? Will whoever have the reputation of virgins be regarded as such?

Cornelia No, but I think we should admit only married women.

Julia Even among married women some are virgins: the wives of eunuchs.

5 **Cornelia** But let this mark of respect be paid to marriage, that by 'women' we mean married women.

Julia In any event, if we exclude only virgins there will still be an enormous throng; it won't diminish much.

Cornelia Those married more than three times shall be excluded too.

10 **Julia** Why?

Cornelia Because they deserve retirement as *emeritae*. Likewise, I think, for those over seventy years of age. A wife should be forbidden to speak disrespectfully of her husband by name; husbands as a class may be discussed, but temperately: 'Nothing to excess.'¹³

15 **Catharine** Why may we speak less freely of husbands here than they talk everywhere about us? My Titius, if he wants to be the life of the party, tells what he did with me the night before and what I said;¹⁴ and often he invents a good deal of it.

Cornelia If the truth must be told, our dignity depends on our husbands.¹⁵

20 If we slander them, what is that but dishonouring ourselves? Now though we have more than a few causes for just complaint, our position, on the whole, is stronger than theirs. In their pursuit of wealth they fly over land and sea,¹⁶ not without risk to their lives; if war breaks out and the trumpet calls, they stand ironclad in the battle line¹⁷ while we sit safe at home. If they
25 break laws, they're judged more seriously; we're let off lightly because of our sex.¹⁸ After all, it is largely up to us how agreeable our husbands are.

It remains to draw up rules about the order of seating, so as to avoid what often happens to the ambassadors of kings, princes, and popes, who wrangle in councils for three whole months before they can get down to
30 business. Consequently I think there should be first an aristocracy in which those with four degrees of nobility shall have precedence; next, those with three; then those with two; after them, those with one; last, those with a half. And in each rank a place shall be decided by ancestry. Bastards shall have last place in their respective ranks. There shall be a second assembly of
35 commoners. In this the women who have borne the most children shall have first place. Among equals, age shall decide. A third assembly will consist of those who have not yet had children.

Catharine What will you do with widows?

Cornelia You're right to remind me. Their place shall be in the midst of the
40 matrons, provided they have or have had children; barren ones shall have last place.

Julia What place do you assign to the wives of priests and monks?

Cornelia We'll consider that in our next session.

Julia What about prostitutes?

Cornelia We won't let this senate be contaminated with the likes of them.

5 **Julia** What about concubines?

Cornelia There's not just a single class of these. We'll deliberate about them at our leisure. Also for the agenda is the question of how decisions should be recorded, whether by points or stones¹⁹ or voice votes or show of hands or division.²⁰

10 **Catharine** In stones there's trickery; and likewise in points. If we walk over to the side we favour, we'll stir up a lot of dust, since we wear long dresses. Therefore the best method is to show one's preference by a voice vote.

Cornelia But it's hard to count voices. Furthermore, we must be careful we don't have clamour instead of council.

15 **Catharine** Nothing is to be done without clerks, lest anything be forgotten.

Cornelia All very well for counting votes, but how will you avoid the clamour?

Catharine No one may speak unless asked and in her turn. Whoever violates the rule shall be ejected from the senate. And if anyone babbles about what
20 is transacted here, she shall be punished by three days' silence.

[**Cornelia**] So much for procedures.²¹ Now hear what subjects we should debate. Our first concern should be our social standing. This depends most of all on dress, a matter so much neglected that nowadays you can hardly tell a noblewoman from a commoner, a married one from an unmarried girl
25 or widow, a housewife from a harlot. Decorum is so far gone that women of every class put on whatever airs they please.²² You can see women worse than commoners, and from the lowest class, dressed up in silks, pleats, flowered patterns, stripes, fine linen, gold, silver, sables and marten furs²³ when all the time their husbands are at home stitching shoes. Their fingers
30 are heavy with emeralds and diamonds²⁴ – they turn up their noses at pearls these days! – to say nothing of their amber and coral and gilded sandals. It used to be enough for women of modest means to use silk girdles, out of respect for their sex, and to decorate the hems of their clothing with a silk fringe. Nowadays there's a double mischief: the family budget's strained,
35 and rank, the safeguard of dignity, is confounded. If commoners are borne in chariots and litters inlaid with ivory and covered with velvet,²⁵ what's left for the rich and powerful? And if the wife of a man who's scarcely a knight wears a train fifteen ells long,²⁶ what shall a duchess or countess do?

And this situation is the more intolerable because we constantly change
40 the fashions so recklessly.²⁷ Linen ribbons used to hang from 'horns' sticking out behind the head. By this adornment you could tell aristocratic women

from commoners. Noble women, to maintain the distinction, took to wearing caps with white fur on the outside varied by black spots. At once the rabble followed suit. When fashion changed again, they wore black linen veils.²⁸

5 The lower classes not only had the nerve to imitate this, but even added gilt edging and finally jewellery. Formerly the upper classes gathered their hair on top of the head, plucking the hairs from the forehead and the temples. This didn't please them long – everybody else was soon doing the same thing. Finally they wore their hair across the forehead. Straightway the lower classes copied them.²⁹ Only ladies used to have escorts and pages to
10 walk before them, and one pretty fellow among them to give madame a hand when she was about to rise and support her left arm with his right when she walked. This honour was accorded only to those of good family. Nowadays, while wives far and wide follow custom, they permit anyone at all to perform this service, just as they let anyone carry their train.

15 Again, only noblewomen used to greet one another with a kiss;³⁰ and they wouldn't allow every Tom, Dick, or Harry to kiss them. What's more, they wouldn't even extend their right hand to just anyone. Now fellows reeking of leather claim a kiss from a woman of the very best family. Not even in marriages is class distinction kept up. Aristocrats marry commoners,
20 commoners aristocrats; as a result we breed a race of mongrels.³¹ No woman is so baseborn that she hesitates to use all the cosmetics of fine ladies, though common women ought to be satisfied with froth of new beer³² or fresh juice extracted from the bark of a tree, or anything else that's cheap. Rouge, white lead,³³ stibium,³⁴ and other choice shades they should leave to women
25 of distinction. At dinner parties and in public procession these days, what disregard of rank! Often a merchant's wife thinks it beneath her to give place to one who has noble blood on both sides.

This particular situation, then, has long demanded that we legislate something definite on these subjects.³⁵ And they could have been settled
30 easily among ourselves, seeing that they concern only women. But in fact we find we have to deal with men too, who exclude us from every social rank and treat us almost as washerwomen and cooks. They think they know best about everything. We'll yield to them when it comes to political offices and the conduct of military affairs. But who could stand their habit of always
35 putting the wife's insignia on the left side of the scutcheon even if her nobility exceeds her husband's by three degrees? Furthermore, it's fair for the mother to have an equal voice in arranging marriages. And perhaps we'll also win the right to have our turn in holding public office; at least those offices which can be held within the city and without bearing arms.

40 This is a summary of the things I think it essential for us to debate. Regarding these, let each woman take thought in order that senatorial

- decisions may be made about every single subject; and if anything else comes to anyone's mind, she should bring it up tomorrow. For we'll meet daily until adjournment. There should be four clerks to take down whatever's said, plus two presiding officers to grant or deny permission to speak. Let this be an assembly and not a debate as to who should have the right to speak.³⁶

NOTES

- 1 *felix faustumque*; see 'The Fabulous Feast' n6.
- 2 Solomon; Prov 11:14, 24:6
- 3 *Historia Augusta: Heliogabalus* 17.1–2
- 4 True, but Cornelia fails to add that the emperor Domitian was murdered there (96 AD). See Suetonius *Domitian* 16–17.
- 5 *Historia Augusta: Heliogabalus* 6.6–9; see *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* trans David Magie, Loeb Classical Library, 3 vols (London and Cambridge, Mass 1921–32) II 117–18, with the notes.
- 6 The emperor Severus Alexander (not Heliogabalus) is said to have kept statues of Christ and Abraham (not Moses) in the sanctuary of his Lares (*Historia Augusta: Severus Alexander* 29.2).
- 7 According to Suetonius, dissensions in the Jewish community at Rome (c 50 AD) had something to do with a certain 'Chrestus.' Subsequently the emperor Claudius banished the Jews from Rome (*Claudius* 25). Tacitus, describing the burning of Rome in the reign of Nero (64 AD), relates that Nero chose the Christians, as they were now called, as scapegoats and killed with dreadful tortures those who confessed to being Christians – so named, Tacitus tells us, after one Christ, who had been executed by Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius (*Annals* 15.44). Christian tradition taught that St Peter and St Paul were also victims of the Neronian persecution. Erasmus' remark about 'Chrestus' is somewhat misleading. The name means merely 'good' or 'kindly.' 'Christus' – Christ – was the disparaged name. Literally it means 'stained or smeared with oil,' but to Christians signified much more: 'anointed,' the word identifying the Messiah, Christ.
- 8 Her name was Symiamira (*Historia Augusta: Heliogabalus* 2.1). She was also known as Julia Soaemias and Julia Augusta. 'Augusta' was the title of an emperor's wife or mother – in modern idiom 'her Majesty.'
- 9 1 Cor 14:34–5; 1 Tim 2:12
- 10 Terence *Phormio* 454; *Adagia* I iii 7
- 11 With these comments compare 'The New Mother' 592:17–35 and 'Cyclops' 869:36–870:4.
- 12 Prov 13:10
- 13 Proverbial; *Adagia* I vi 96
- 14 'If it is disgraceful to make known what men say in their cups, how much more disgraceful is it to be unable to keep to oneself acts of which only the nuptial couch should be a witness!' (*Lingua* LB IV 686C–D / ASD IV-1A 75:591–3 / CWE 29 307).
- 15 A doctrine expounded in an earlier dialogue, 'Marriage'

- 16 Cf Horace *Epistles* 1.1.45–6; quoted in *Enchiridion* LB v 23E / Holborn 60:29 / CWE 66 58.
- 17 Not always, says the wife in 'The New Mother'; sometimes they run away (594:8–9, 17–19).
- 18 With this comment on lighter punishment for women compare 'The Well-to-do-Beggars' 479:34–7 and n87; on women's responsibility for their husbands' good temper, see also 'Marriage' 312:2, 318:2–3.
- 19 That is, by making a point or dot in a waxen tablet or by placing a white or black stone in an urn
- 20 Walking over to the side one favours. This method quickly showed whether a bill or proposal was about to be passed or rejected, unless the vote was so close that a head-count had to be taken. *Adagia* II vii 12; and see A.H.J. Greenidge *Roman Public Life* (London 1911) 271–2.
- 21 Cornelia . . . the right to speak.] Both the first and final authorized editions of this colloquy (March 1529 and March 1533) assign this long speech to Catharine (abbreviated CA), as do early reprints by other printers (for example Paris: Yolanda Bonhomme 1533; Cologne: Gymnicus 1537; Lyons: Gryphius 1538 and 1542; Basel: Bryling 1540; Cologne: Agrippina 1559). In the *Opera omnia* of 1538–40 and LB, however, these lines are spoken by Cornelia (CO), a correction required by coherence and artistic unity, for Cornelia is convenor of this assembly of women and obviously the originator of its concerns.
- 22 Decent and appropriate dress is abandoned for vulgar, extravagant ostentation. Erasmus had written emphatically on this theme a few years before in *Institutio christianii matrimonii* (1526). See LB v 705A, 707A–708B, where he begins, as Christian moralists generally did, with Peter and Paul (1 Pet 3:1–6; 1 Tim 2:9–10); and see Paraphrase on Timothy LB VII 1042B–C. St Peter on 'adorning' was quoted in an earlier colloquy, 'Marriage' 310:11–15. That is the point of departure for Cornelia here.
 After apostolic times female dress and adornment continued to be a topic of concern for Christian preachers and writers. Tertullian's *De cultu feminarum* is a patristic specimen. He criticizes the use of jewellery, of colour in clothing, of cosmetics, of dyeing the hair (1.6, 1.8, 2.5, 2.6; CSEL 70 66–7, 68–9, 78–80, 80–2), subjects of attention by moralists through the centuries. Jerome is a familiar example of ecclesiastical strictness on all such matters. A thousand years after Jerome lived we find many earnest preachers, especially the friars, dwelling on these same themes. Some of the affectations of current fashions in Erasmus' time receive admonitory attention from the popular Franciscan preacher Michel Menot (*Sermons choisis* (1508–1518) ed Joseph Nève [Paris 1924] 77–8, 132, 226, 227, 254). On Menot see Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* II 1071–9.
 Decorum in dress regulated what was considered proper attire for public appearance. What jewellery, and even what kinds of vehicles were suitable, are reported as aims of the *senaculum* established by Heliogabalus for his mother (*Historia Augusta: Heliogabalus* 4.3–4). Peasants now wear silk clothes and gold chains; burghers' wives dress better than countesses, Brant complains in his *Narrenschiff* (section 82; trans Zeydel 269–70).
- 23 *pellibus zebellinis, madauricis*. The adjectives are late Latin. Erasmus says of *pellibus madauricis* that they were commonly called *marders* (Allen VI 503:15–16 Appendix 19).

- 24 Some of the numerous pilgrims who stopped in Venice on their way to Jerusalem were impressed by the jewellery and luxury in dress of Venetian women. See for instance H.F.M. Prescott *Friar Felix at Large* (New Haven 1950) 83, 84. The *senaculum* led by Symiamira, mother of Heliogabalus, made rules about who might wear gold or jewels on their shoes. Erasmus notes in *Apophthegmata* (LB IV 285c) that Severus Alexander, who succeeded Heliogabalus as emperor, decreed that women of the royal household must be limited to one hairnet, one pair of earrings, one necklace, and one cloak decorated with gold (*Historia Augusta: Severus* 41.1–2). Von Harff (on whom see ‘Rash Vows’ n3) 65 comments on the high heels worn by Venetian women.
- 25 Chariots were *pilenta*, stately four-wheeled carriages used by Roman ladies, including vestals. Litters were what the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries called ‘sedans’ or ‘sedan-chairs.’ For ‘inlaid with ivory’ cf Plautus *Aulularia* 168.
- 26 Between five and six feet. Long trains offended moralists. They were denounced as the devil’s carriage in the thirteenth century (*The Exempla of Jacques de Vitry* ed T.F. Crane, Folk-Lore Society Publications 26 [London 1890; repr 1967] 235 no 243); in the fifteenth century by the *Destructorium viciorum* of Alexander Carpenter (ed G.R. Owst [London 1952] 29); and in the sixteenth by Erasmus (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 891c). In Allen Ep 447:530–6 / CWE Ep 447:584–91 he compares fashionable trains with those of cardinals. In ‘The Well-to-do Beggars’ a friar mocks this affectation, which even certain cardinals are not ashamed to imitate (480:26–9); cf *De civilitate* LB I 1037A / CWE 27 279. A Bohemian visitor to England in 1466 reported that he had never seen such long trains as those worn by English women (Leo of Rozmital *Travels* 53).
- 27 In his lifetime, Erasmus remarks, he had seen many changes in fashion (Allen Ep 1479:16–18 / CWE Ep 1479:20–1). Those of sixty years ago would seem ridiculous today (*Ciceronianus* LB I 991D–E / ASD I-2 635:10–13 / CWE 28 381). He is not optimistic about the chances of getting English or Italian women to take seriously St Paul’s admonitions about dress (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 932E). They dress as they please. In a ruthlessly rational society like Utopia, the material and colour of men’s and women’s clothing never change (*Utopia* Yale CWM 4 126–7, 133–5).
- 28 *flammea*, usually flame-coloured bridal veils, but the ones meant here are black.
- 29 A similar complaint about hair styles is made in *Ciceronianus* (LB I 991E / ASD I-2 635:13–15 / CWE 28 381). The subject seems to have fascinated moralists and social critics since the time of St Paul, who was offended by braided hair (1 Tim 2:9).
- 30 Another subject of attention for the *senaculum* ruled by Heliogabalus’ mother (*Historia Augusta: Heliogabalus* 4.4). Cornelia’s criticism is dictated by her notions of decorum, which ought to govern and protect class distinctions. As we have learned from earlier colloquies, Erasmus denounced both promiscuous and customary kissing because of risks to health (‘A Marriage in Name Only’ 852:5–6, 854:3–4; see also ‘Inns’ n7). The lines in Allen Ep 103:17–24 / CWE Ep 103:19–29 on the casual plenty of kisses in England is a *locus classicus*. See also ‘The Lover of Glory’ 970:34–5 and n54. On the dangers of kissing in another context, see ‘Courtship’ 268:16–25 with the notes.
- 31 Suitable marriages (as we hear in ‘Courtship’ 263:39–264:19) are those between persons of comparable birth, health, age, and talents. Matches between rich and

poor, old and young, healthy and unhealthy, ignorant and educated, violate decorum and imperil social order. So Erasmus warns in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 685B–C. The principals in ‘Courtship’ are well matched; for a sad contrast see ‘A Marriage in Name Only.’

- 32 ‘Flower of new ale,’ as it was called in England. Roman women used beer as a cosmetic for the face, as Pliny says (*Naturalis historia* 22.164). Ovid’s list of recipes for cosmetics, *De medicamine faciei* (100 lines) is usually printed with his *Ars amatoria*.
- 33 Worldly widows painted their faces with these, Jerome says (Ep 127.3; PL 22 1088).
- 34 Antimony, a whitish metallic element long used in the form of powder as a cosmetic. It is mentioned in the Bible (4 Kings 9:30 Vulg): Jezebel ‘painted her eyes with stibium.’
- 35 The particular follies and excesses Cornelia has described are among those Erasmus tells us he had heard condemned by preachers. He himself censures them in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 707A–708B and *Ecclesiastes* LB v 891A–E. There is no end to study – and disapproval – of fashions in dress and of cosmetics. Hamlet’s outburst ‘God hath given you one face and you make yourselves another’ (3.1.150) is one of innumerable examples in sermons, tracts, and literature. Illustrations of the fashions or fads named by Cornelia are available in many sixteenth-century books or are reproduced in modern works on Renaissance costume. Baif’s treatise has already been mentioned in the introduction to this colloquy. Heinrich Vogtherr *Libellus artificiosus* (Strasbourg 1539) includes several hundred woodcuts of head-dress, gloves, shoes, and much else. German fashions later in the sixteenth century are shown in the 122 woodcuts in Jost Amman’s *Gynaeceum sive theatrum mulierum* (Frankfurt 1586). Even more comprehensive is Cesare Vecellio *Degli habitati antichi et moderni* (Venice 1590; repr New York 1977, 1979), containing 500 woodcuts (nearly half of them Italian costumes), including many of Asian and African dress. The younger Holbein, who spent much of his early career in Basel, knew Erasmus well and painted splendid portraits of him. He illustrated *Moriae encomium* and made interesting drawings of styles favoured by the ladies of Basel. On these drawings see H. Knackfuss *Holbein* trans Campbell Dodgson (Bielefeld and Leipzig 1899) 54–8 and figures 42–4. A Dürer drawing shows a lady in Venetian costume contrasted with a German housewife (no 59 in Erwin Panofsky *Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* 4th ed [Princeton 1955]). E. Rodocanachi *La femme italienne* (introduction 906 above) 89–106 has many excellent illustrations. For others see Frederic Stibbert *Civil and Military Clothing in Europe* (New York 1968); Wolfgang Bruhn and Max Tilke *A Pictorial History of Costume* (translation of *Das Kostümwerke*; New York 1973); Max Tilke *Costume Patterns and Designs* (London 1956); Michele Vocino *Storia del costume* (Rome 1952); François Boucher *History of Costume in the West* (London 1967); C.W. and P. Cunnington *Handbook of English Costume in the Sixteenth Century* (London 1970); Georgine de Courtais *Women’s Headdress and Hairstyles in England from AD 600 to the Present Day* (London 1973). On English interest in these and related matters see Louis B. Wright *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (1935; repr Ithaca 1965) chapter 13, and Carroll Camden *The Elizabethan Woman* (Houston 1952; repr Mamaroneck, NY 1975)

chapter 7. 'There is nothing in Englande, more constant, then the inconstancie of attire,' as John Lyly put it in *Euphues and His England* (ed Edward Arber [Westminster 1900] 437. The abundance of tracts and sermons in print tends to confirm our impression that women's dress and deportment were closely watched by critical observers, both lay and clerical. Not without reason was a sermon 'Against Excess of Apparel' added in 1563 to *The seconde tome of homelyes* (STC 13663), pulpit discourses to be read in church by Elizabethan clergy who were not licensed to preach sermons of their own making. Of course excess of attire in men as well as women was deplored, but not so forcefully when decorum or morals were at issue, since the apostolic admonitions (1 Tim 2:9–10; 1 Pet 3:1–6) were addressed to women.

Some of the extravagances described in Erasmus' colloquy, for instance outlandish headdress and expensive materials, were mentioned from time to time in sumptuary legislation. Enactments regulating excesses in food and drink and other aspects of daily life, not only dress, received attention from civil as well as ecclesiastical authorities. Sumptuary regulations promulgated by Henry VIII in 1517 specify how many dishes different classes may have at a meal and what game (text in Hughes and Larkin *Tudor Royal Proclamations* 1 128–9): 'Item, partridge, plovers, woodcocks, and all other wildfowl of like greatness, but six in a dish for a cardinal only, and four in a dish for all other lords' (no 81). Such rules may not have been easy to enforce, but there can be little doubt of the seriousness with which they were written. For some other examples consult two volumes of Johns Hopkins University Studies in History and Political Science: 44 no 1, Frances Elizabeth Baldwin *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulations in England* (1926) 120–91; 36 no 2, Kent R. Greenfield *Sumptuary Law in Nürnberg* (1918) 106–25; also John M. Vincent *Costume and Conduct in the Laws of Basel, Bern, and Zurich 1370–1800* (Baltimore 1935) 42–52; Rodocanachi *La femme italienne* 131–60.

- 36 The Latin for 'debate . . .' is *divinatio*, which, strictly speaking, refers to the Roman legal process to determine who is to be appointed prosecutor in a criminal case. The Romans had no public prosecutor. On *divinatio* see Gellius 2.4; Quintilian 3.10.3.

EARLY TO RISE

Diluculum

First printed in the September 1529 edition.

Writing in March 1492 to his son Giovanni, who at the age of sixteen had just become a Roman cardinal, Lorenzo de' Medici, 'the Magnificent,' added to other practical advice this admonition: 'One rule above all others I recommend that you follow with utmost diligence, and that is to rise early in the morning, for besides being good for your health, this will enable you to think about and arrange all the business of the day.' The youthful cardinal was to become Pope Leo x in 1513. Erasmus – who had been ordained priest in April 1492, shortly after Giovanni de' Medici's elevation to the cardinalate – corresponded with this pope, dedicated to him his edition of the Greek New Testament (1516), and was indebted to him for some important favours. On those see in this volume the introduction to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 284.

Such counsel as Lorenzo de' Medici's on getting up betimes was both sincere and wise. From Solomon and Homer to the present day, poets, pedagogues, and other earnest reformers have repeated this advice. Some of them have found it easier to preach than to practise. 'I have, all my life long, been lying till noon,' Johnson confessed to Boswell. 'Yet I tell all young men, and tell them with great sincerity, that nobody who does not rise early will ever do any good' (*Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* ed Frederick A. Pottle and Charles H. Bennett [New York 1936] 169).

Erasmus himself was a poor sleeper, thanks to a naturally delicate constitution, digestive troubles, and overwork. He could not fall asleep until late, and if once awakened could not go back to sleep for hours. He was compelled therefore to sleep during those golden hours of early morning when, by his own doctrine, he should have been up and, as this colloquy puts it, 'alive' (Allen Ep 447:398–406 / CWE Ep 447:436–44). 'No man practises as well so he writes,' Dr. Johnson observed (*ibidem*). But the doctrine was sound and in the present dialogue persuasive. For other statements of the theme see, from 1497, Allen Ep 56:57 / CWE Ep 56:66–7; for one from 1535, *Ecclesiastes* LB v 788E–9A. His model schoolboy, Gaspar in 'The Whole Duty of Youth,' gets up at five or six o'clock (92:1–2); none too early, for many sixteenth-century schools began the day's activities at six in summer and seven in winter. The boys in 'Off to School' are hurrying to meet a five o'clock roll call (114:6–12). A labourer's day ran from five in the morning until seven or eight at night.

The working day in More's Utopia was only six hours – an utterly fantastic notion by contemporary standards. See Yale cwm 4 126:23–37; 404.

The Italian text of Lorenzo de' Medici's letter to his son will be found in appendix 66 of William Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici* (Liverpool 1795; many editions).

NEPHALIUS, PHILYPNUS¹

Nephalius I was hoping to meet you today, Philypnus, but they swore you weren't at home.

5 **Philypnus** They didn't fib altogether: I wasn't at home to you, but to myself I was very much at home.

Nephalius What kind of riddle is this?

Philypnus You know the old proverb, 'I don't sleep for everybody.' And you're not unfamiliar with the joke about Nasica. When he wanted to see
10 his friend Ennius, the maid, on master's orders, said Ennius wasn't at home. Nasica understood and went away. But when Ennius in turn called at Nasica's house and asked the boy if he was in, Nasica shouted from an inner room, 'I'm not at home.' And when Ennius, recognizing his voice, said, 'You nervy fellow, don't I recognize your voice?' Nasica replied, 'You're even
15 worse: you refuse to believe me, when I believed your maid.'²

Nephalius Maybe you were too busy?

Philypnus Quite the contrary – I was pleasantly relaxed.

Nephalius Once again you torment me with a riddle.

Philypnus Then I'll explain; and I won't call a spade anything but a spade,
20 either.³

Nephalius Explain.

Philypnus I was sound asleep.

Nephalius What's that you say? But it was already past eight, though the sun rises before four this month.

25 **Philypnus** For all I care the sun is free to rise at midnight, provided I may sleep as late as I like.

Nephalius But was this an accident or is it your custom?

Philypnus Simply custom.

Nephalius But addiction to something bad is the worst kind of custom.

30 **Philypnus** No, there's no sleep sweeter than that after sunrise.

Nephalius At what hour do you usually get up?

Philypnus Between four and nine.

Nephalius Enough leeway! Queens are dressed in less time than that. But how did you fall into this habit?

Philypnus From the practice of keeping up our drinking parties, games, and fun until late at night. We make up for that loss by morning sleep.

Nephalius Hardly ever have I seen a man more ruinously wasteful than you.

- 5 **Philypnus** Seems to me more like thrift than extravagance. I don't burn candles all the while or wear out clothes.

- Nephalius** A ridiculous thrift – saving glass in order to lose jewels!⁴ The philosopher thought otherwise; when asked what was most precious, he answered, 'Time.'⁵ Moreover, since early morning is certainly the best part
10 of the whole day, you cheerfully waste what is the most precious part of the most precious thing of all.

Philypnus Is what's granted to the frail body wasted?

- Nephalius** On the contrary, it's taken from the frail body, which is treated most kindly and is most invigorated when refreshed by seasonable and
15 moderate sleep and strengthened by morning alertness.

Philypnus But to sleep is delightful.

Nephalius What can be delightful when you're insensible?

Philypnus This very insensibility to trouble is delightful.

- Nephalius** Yet by that account they're happier who sleep underground,
20 never troubled by insomnia.

Philypnus They say the body is exceedingly nourished by sleep.

- Nephalius** That's the food of dormice,⁶ not men. Animals intended for banquets are properly fattened. What's the good of a man's growing fat except to have a heavier load to walk about with? Tell me: if you had a
25 servant, would you prefer him fat or brisk and fit for all his duties?

Philypnus But I'm no servant.

Nephalius Enough for me that you'd prefer a competent worker to a fat one.

Philypnus Of course I'd prefer that.

- 30 **Nephalius** But Plato said a man's soul is the man, the body nothing but its dwelling or instrument. Surely you'll admit, I suppose, that soul is the principal part of man and body the servant of soul.⁷

Philypnus Granted, if you like.

- Nephalius** Since you wouldn't want your servant to be a slow belly⁸ but
35 prefer him active and alert, why do you furnish your soul with a fat and lazy worker?

Philypnus I yield to the truth.

Nephalius Now consider another loss. As soul far excels body, so you'll admit the riches of the soul far surpass the goods of the body.

- 40 **Philypnus** Probably.

Nephalius But among the goods of the soul, wisdom is chief.

Philypnus Granted.

Nephalius For attaining wisdom no part of the day is more useful than dawn,⁹ when the sun, rising anew, brings strength and vigour to everything and dispels the usual vapours that are produced by the stomach and becloud the habitation of the mind.

Philypnus I don't deny it.

Nephalius Now imagine how much learning you can acquire in those four hours you waste by sleeping at the wrong time.¹⁰

Philypnus A lot, surely.

10 **Nephalius** In studies, I've found, one morning hour is worth more than three afternoon ones, and that without any harm to the body.

Philypnus So I've heard.

Nephalius Then count how much the total will be if you add up the loss for each of those days.

15 **Philypnus** A huge one, to be sure.

Nephalius A person who squanders gold and jewels is regarded as a spendthrift and receives a guardian. Isn't one who wastes *these* goods, which are so much more precious, a far more shameful spendthrift?

Philypnus So it appears if we judge the matter rationally.

20 **Nephalius** Now consider what Plato wrote: 'Nothing is more fair, nothing lovelier, than wisdom, which, could it be viewed with physical eyes, would provoke unbelievable passion.'¹¹

Philypnus But it can't be viewed.

25 **Nephalius** Not with physical eyes, I admit; but it is perceived with the eyes of the mind, which is the more powerful part of man. And where love is incredibly strong, there, necessarily, the highest pleasure exists whenever the mind joins with such a beloved.

Philypnus Sounds convincing.

30 **Nephalius** Go now and exchange sleep, the image of death,¹² for this pleasure, if you think proper.

Philypnus But meantime my nightly amusements are gone.

35 **Nephalius** The worse changed for better, dishonourable for honourable, most sordid for most precious – well do they come to an end. Well does he lose lead who turns it into gold. Nature has assigned night for sleep; the rising sun, though it summons living creatures of every kind, calls man above all to the duties of life. 'They that sleep,' says Paul, 'sleep in the night, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.'¹³ What is more disgraceful, then, than the fact that though all living creatures rise with the sun (some even greet him with song at his approach, before he yet appears),
40 though the elephant worships the rising sun,¹⁴ a man snores away long after sunrise? As often as that golden splendour brightens your bedroom, doesn't

it seem to rebuke the sleeper? 'Fool, why are you glad to lose the best part of your life? I don't shine for you to sleep in secret but that you may busy yourself with good, honest work. Nobody lights a lamp to sleep by but to do some task; and by this the fairest of all lamps do you nothing but snore?'

5 **Philypnus** You declaim beautifully.

Nephalius Not beautifully but truly. Come, I don't doubt you've often heard that line of Hesiod, 'Thrift at the bottom of the chest is too late.'¹⁵

Philypnus Very often. The wine in the middle of the jug is best.¹⁶

Nephalius But in life the first part, namely youth, is best.

10 **Philypnus** So it is, undoubtedly.

Nephalius Yet dawn is to day what youth is to life. Aren't they fools, then, who waste their youth in trifles, their morning hours in sleep?

Philypnus Evidently.

Nephalius Or is there any possession comparable to human life?

15 **Philypnus** Not even the whole Persian treasury.¹⁷

Nephalius Wouldn't you hate vehemently a man who could – and would – shorten your life by several years through evil arts?

Philypnus For my part, I'd want to take *his* life.

Nephalius But worse, and more harmful, I think, are those who voluntarily
20 shorten their own lives.

Philypnus I agree – if such could be found.

Nephalius Could be found? Why, everyone who's like you does it.

Philypnus What an idea!

Nephalius The best there is. So ponder it. Don't you think Pliny was
25 perfectly right in saying 'Life is wakefulness, and the more time a man spends in study, the more hours he adds to life'?¹⁸ For sleep is a kind of death,¹⁹ and therefore it is feigned to come from the underworld and is said by Homer to be death's brother.²⁰ And so those filled with sleep should be
30 considered neither among the living nor among the dead, yet more dead than alive.

Philypnus So it seems, yes.

Nephalius Now calculate how much of life is forfeited by those who lose three or four hours in sleep every day.

Philypnus An enormous amount, I see.

35 **Nephalius** Wouldn't you regard as a god an alchemist who could add ten years to life and restore advanced age to the vigour of youth?

Philypnus Of course I would.

Nephalius But you can confer so divine a favour as this on yourself.

Philypnus How?

40 **Nephalius** Because morning is the youth of the day, it glows until noon; presently comes the season of mature vigour, succeeded by old age –

evening, so to speak. Sunset follows the evening, like the death of the day. 'Thrift is a large income,'²¹ but nowhere larger than here. Or isn't it an enormous gain for a man to stop losing a large part of life – and that the best part, too?

5 **Philypnus** You're perfectly right.

Nephalius Quite shameful, then, seems the complaint of those who find fault with nature for making man's life so short when they themselves voluntarily cut off so much of what is granted to them. Man's life is long enough if spent frugally.²² It's no small profit to do things at the right time.

10 After lunch, when the body, stuffed with food, oppresses the mind, we're hardly half-men, nor is it safe to summon to higher levels, from the stomach's workshop, the spirits that are doing the work of digestion; after supper, much less so. But in the morning a man is a whole man, while the body tends briskly to every function, while the mind thrives and is alert, while all
15 the mental organs are calm and serene, while (as the poet says) a particle of the divine spirit knows its source and is borne up to what is noble.²³

Philypnus You preach elegantly indeed.

Nephalius Agamemnon in Homer is told, I believe, 'A counsellor should not sleep the whole night through.'²⁴ How much more disgraceful to lose so
20 much of the day in sleep!

Philypnus True – for a counsellor. I'm not commander of an army.

Nephalius If anything is dearer to you than yourself, never mind Homer's saying. A coppersmith rises before daybreak for the sake of a slight profit. Cannot the hope of wisdom rouse us at least to hear the sun summoning
25 us to countless wealth? Physicians don't as a rule give a drug except at dawn. They know the golden hours when they can help the body; do we not know them for the purpose of enriching and restoring the mind? If this consideration has little weight with you, hear what divine wisdom speaks through Solomon: 'Those that seek me early shall find me.'²⁵ In the mystical
30 psalms,²⁶ now, how great is the praise of morning!²⁷ In the morning the prophet extols the mercy of the Lord; in the morning is his voice heard; in the morning his prayer comes before the Lord;²⁸ and in Luke the evangelist the people seeking health and instruction from the Lord throng to him in the morning.²⁹ – Why do you sigh, Philypnus?

35 **Philypnus** I can scarcely hold back the tears when I think how much of life I've thrown away.³⁰

Nephalius Useless to torment yourself on account of what can't be recalled; yet it can be corrected by diligence hereafter. So set to work and don't lose the future also through vain regret over the past.

40 **Philypnus** You do well to admonish me, but a habit of long standing has claimed me for its own.

Nephalius Pooh! One nail drives out another.³¹ habit is overcome by habit.

Philypnus But to give up what you're used to is hard.

Nephalius At the start, yes, but a different habit first relieves that distress and soon transforms it into the greatest delight, so you shouldn't mind a bit
5 of trouble.

Philypnus I fear it will continue.

Nephalius If you were in your seventies, I wouldn't pull you away from fixed habits. Now you're hardly over seventeen, I imagine. And what is there this age cannot overcome if only it makes up its mind to do so?

10 **Philypnus** Well, I'll try – try to become learned instead of lazy.³²

Nephalius If you do that, my dear Philypnus, I'm sure that after a few days you'll both congratulate yourself sincerely and thank me for reproving you.

NOTES

1 Nephalius, also the name of a speaker in an earlier colloquy, 'The Godly Feast,' signifies 'sober,' 'temperate,' hence 'alert' or 'watchful'; Erasmus remembers the Greek of 2 Tim 4:5. Philypnus means 'fond of sleep.'

2 Two well-known anecdotes are conflated in these lines; see 'Patterns' nn82, 84.

3 In the original 'call a fig a fig,' a proverbial or semi-proverbial expression from Lucian, who has 'call a fig a fig and a spade a spade' in *Zeus tragoedus* 32. See *Adagia* II iii 5.

4 Not in *Adagia* in this form, but cf I ix 30.

5 Thalès, a presocratic philosopher and one of the seven sages of ancient Greece. For the quotation see Diogenes Laertius 1.35. The observation was attributed to others too, Erasmus reminds us (*Apophthegmata* LB IV 348B). Thales said time is 'the wisest of things,' for it brings everything to light. His name became synonymous with speculative as well as practical wisdom; see *Adagia* III vii 26.

6 *Adagia* prolegomena 13 LB II 12F, from Martial 3.58.36, 13.59

7 Soul is the true man, the self; the body is its instrument and possession (Plato *Alcibiades* I 129C–31B; *Laws* 959A–B). Soul is also called the 'immortal principle,' accompanied by a mortal body (*Timaeus* 69C). The body is dwelling, garrison, prison (*Phaedo* 62B and passim) or (in *Cratylus* 399B) grave; cf 'The Godly Feast' 194:1–7. For a brief exposition of Aristotelian doctrines of the soul see 'The New Mother' 601:29–605:2.

8 Titus 1:12; cf Erasmus' note in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 968D–E.

9 Early morning is congenial to the Muses, suitable for studies (Allen Ep 56:57 / CWE Ep 56:66–7), and that is the reason, Erasmus writes elsewhere, that Aristotle lectured on physics in the morning and on rhetoric in the afternoon (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 788E–789A).

10 A bad thing for young children, Erasmus warns in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 711A–B. As for adults, Plato declares that to spend the whole night in sleep is shameful. Master and mistress of the household should be early

- risers (*Laws* 807E). An Italian proverb recommended 'five hours for the student, six for the merchant, seven for the people, eight for the sluggard' Thorndike *University Records* 390). Six hours of sleep are enough for students, a fourteenth-century physician tells his sons, and 'too much is a sin' (ibidem 157).
- 11 In *Phaedrus* 250D–251A Plato insists that wisdom cannot be seen with eyes; only beauty can. Cicero quotes the passage in *De officiis* 1.15 and *De finibus* 2.52.
 - 12 So also In *psalmum quartum concio* IV LB v 286D. Of the dying Cornelius in 'The Funeral' we read: 'You would have said he had fallen asleep, not died' (779:12–13). Donne's 'rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures bee' (*Holy Sonnets* 10) is one of the more familiar Renaissance allusions to sleep as *imago* of death. Sleep as metaphor for death was common in primitive Christianity (1 Cor 15:6; 1 Thess 4:13; 2 Pet 3:4)
 - 13 1 Thess 5:7
 - 14 So Plutarch *Moralia* 972B–C *De sollertia animalium*. Pliny reports that elephants salute both sun and moon (*Naturalis historia* 8.1), as does Aelian (*De natura animalium* 4.10, 7.44).
 - 15 *Works and Days* 368–9; see *Adagia* II ii 64. Cf 'Youth' 93:24–30.
 - 16 Hesiod, as in preceding note
 - 17 *gaza*, a Persian loan-word in Greek and Latin, as in Horace *Odes* 1.29.2, 2.16.9
 - 18 Preface to *Naturalis historia* 18–19. The idea is a commonplace. Both sleep and excessive fatigue are detrimental to study (Plato *Republic* 537B). Cf 'Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me. Moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep . . . To be awake is to be alive' (Henry David Thoreau *Walden* 2 'Where I Lived, and What I Lived for').
 - 19 Note 12 above
 - 20 *Iliad* 14.231, 16.672, 682; but see Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 1.92.
 - 21 Cicero *Paradoxa Stoicorum* 49
 - 22 Seneca *De brevitate vitae* (in *Dialogi*) 1.3. For a religious reflection on this dictum see *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB v 1305A–B.
 - 23 Cf Horace *Satires* 2.2.76–81. On the effects of overeating see 'The New Mother' n50.
 - 24 *Iliad* 2.24; spoken by a dream sent by Zeus to Agamemnon who, as leader of the Greeks, is the 'counsellor' responsible for the host besieging Troy. The line became proverbial; see *Adagia* II vii 95.
 - 25 Prov 6:17
 - 26 'Mystical' here serves to distinguish psalms with strongly spiritual and devotional language from others concerned largely with historical events, Israel's woes, or hopes for deliverance from enemies.
 - 27 Found in Pss 5:3 (5.4 Vulg), 30:5 (29:6 Vulg), 49:14 (48:15 Vulg), 55:17 (54:18 Vulg), 59:16 (58:17 Vulg), 65:8 (64:9 Vulg), 88:13 (87:14 Vulg), 92:2 (91:3 Vulg), 119:147 (118:148 Vulg), 130:6 (129:6 Vulg), 143:8 (142:8 Vulg). Erasmus' interpretations of the Psalms are of two kinds: those in extensive commentaries on eleven of them (LB v 171–556) and in notes or allusions throughout his writings on religion and religious texts. The eleven Psalms are 1, 2, 3, 4, 15 (14 Vulg), 23 (22 Vulg), 29 (28 Vulg), 34 (33 Vulg), 39 (38 Vulg), 84 (83 Vulg), 86 (85 Vulg). The commentary on Ps 15 (14 Vulg) was printed as *De puritate tabernaculi* (1536), that on Ps 84 (83 Vulg) as *De concordia* (1533), and that on

Ps 29 (28 Vulg) was hardly a commentary at all, since it became *De bello Turcico* (1530).

On Erasmus' attention to the Psalms consult G. Chantraine 'Erasme, lecteur des Psaumes' in *Colloquia Erasmiiana Turonensia* II 691–712.

28 As in Isa 33:2, 50:4; Jer 21:12; Ezek 12:8, 24:18, 33:22; Hos 6:4; Amos 4:4; Zeph 3:5

29 Luke 6:13–17

30 *iacturam fecerim*, as in 'The Shipwreck' 353:20 (see n14); a common expression but apparently not proverbial

31 *Adagia* I ii 4

32 A pun: 'ex Philypno fiam Philologus'

THE SOBER FEAST

Νηφάλιον συμπόσιον

First printed in the September 1529 edition.

Νηφάλιον in the Greek title refers to ancient Athenian sacrifices at which libations were made without honey, only water mixed with wine being used. Hence a sober feast, like the one here, a social occasion instead of a religious rite, may have the same title if it is wineless and abstemious. So Erasmus tells us in *Adagia* II ix 96.

The opening lines of the dialogue recall the garden setting of some other colloquies, particularly 'The Godly Feast.' Although this convivium is much shorter, it meets the Erasmian requirements that at such gatherings the conversation, like the setting, should be both pleasant and instructive. Thanks to his prodigious knowledge of classical and patristic literature and his memory of texts, Erasmus had always at hand a store of anecdotes, aphorisms, and illustrations. Many of them in this and other colloquies can be found in *Adagia* or in *Apophthegmata* (1531; LB IV 93–380), a collection of maxims from ancient kings, philosophers, and other notable persons. Many of these sayings come from Plutarch's *Lives* and *Moralia*. Between 1514 and 1526 Erasmus published translations of eleven essays from the *Moralia*. One, on how to distinguish a friend from a flatterer, he dedicated to Henry VIII (Ep 272); another, on taking profit from one's enemies, to Wolsey (Ep 284). His versions of Plutarch are reprinted in LB IV 1–92 and ASD IV-2 117–322. No Greek writer is more sound than Plutarch on ethical subjects (Allen Ep 2431:89–91, and see 'The Godly Feast' n303). The sixteenth century shared Erasmus' conviction that essential lessons of history can be learned from the words as well as deeds of the ancients.

ALBERT, BARTHOLINUS, CHARLES, DENIS, AEMILIUS,
FRANCIS, GERARD, JEROME, JAMES, LAWRENCE¹

Albert Have you ever seen anything more delightful than this garden?

Bartholinus The Fortunate Isles² have scarcely anything more pleasing, I
5 dare say.

Charles Indeed I seem to see the paradise for which God appointed Adam guardian and gardener.

Denis Nestor and Priam both could grow young again here.

Francis Nay, even the dead could revive.

Gerard I'd willingly add to your exaggeration if I could.

Jerome Everything, in fact, is wonderfully attractive.

James We ought to dedicate this garden with a few drinks.

5 **Lawrence** Our friend James is right.

Albert This place was consecrated by such rites a long time ago. But understand: I've nothing to offer you by way of lunch unless you like a dry drinking party.³ I'll serve lettuce without salt, vinegar, and oil. There's not a drop to drink except what this well affords. I haven't even bread or a cup; and this is the season of the year that feasts the eyes more than the belly.

10 **Bartholinus** But you have playing boards and balls.⁴ We'll dedicate the garden with a game if it can't be done conveniently with a party.

Albert Since we're a gathering of such fine fellows, I've thought of something – call it both fun and feast if you like – that in my opinion would be much more suitable for dedicating this garden.

15 **Charles** What?

Albert Let each one make a contribution of his own; we'll have no lack of feast, as agreeable as it is abundant.

Aemilius What shall we contribute who've come here empty-handed?

20 **Albert** Empty-handed – you who carry such riches in your mind?

Francis We await your pleasure.

Albert Let each offer to the company the best thing he's read this week.

Gerard A good idea. At parties of this kind nothing is more appropriate to you, the host, or to this place. We'll all follow you, the promoter of this scheme.

25 **Albert** I won't decline, if it's agreeable to you. I was extremely delighted today with a most Christian saying by one who was not a Christian.⁵ After Phocion, a man scarcely surpassed by any Athenian in probity and in devotion to public good, had been condemned, through envy, and was about to drink the hemlock, he was asked by friends what were his final instructions for his sons. 'That they should never wish to remember this injury,' he said.⁶

30 **Bartholinus** You'd hardly find an example of such remarkable forbearance today among the Dominicans and Franciscans!⁷ So I'll relate a comparable one, since I can't equal it. Aristides was very similar to Phocion; a man so incorruptible that the common people nicknamed him 'the Just.' Jealousy of this title led to ostracism of the man who best deserved the homage of his country: he was ordered to leave his native soil. After he had understood that the people were offended with him solely because of his nickname, 35 'the Just,' though otherwise they had always found that justice working to their advantage, he calmly obeyed. In exile he was asked by friends what

he would wish for his most ungrateful city. 'Nothing,' he said, 'except prosperity so great that Aristides never comes into their heads.'⁸

Charles It's surprising that Christians aren't ashamed of themselves for becoming incensed over an injury, however slight, and plotting revenge by
 5 hook or by crook.⁹ The entire life of Socrates, in my opinion, was simply an example of moderation and long-suffering.

But in order not to hold back my contribution, I'll tell one story that pleased me most. As Socrates was walking along the street, some villain punched him. When Socrates bore this in silence, his friends urged him to
 10 get even, but he said, 'What shall I do to the fellow who struck me?' 'Have him arrested,' they replied. 'Nonsense,' said he. 'If a donkey had kicked me should I have had the law on him, with you for witnesses?' Meaning that that rascally lout was no better than a donkey, and that it's petty to be incapable of putting up with abuse from a blockhead that you'd bear from a brute beast.¹⁰

Denis Examples of restraint are fewer and less remarkable in Roman annals, nor do I suppose one would win high praise by his forbearance if he spared the vanquished and overthrew the proud.¹¹ Still, I think it should not be forgotten that the elder Cato, when a certain Lentulus foully spat in his face, retorted only with 'Hereafter I'll have an answer for those who say you have
 20 no cheek.' (The Latins said those who had no shame had no countenance, so the joke depends on an ambiguity.)¹²

Aemilius Everyone to his taste. Among all the famous sayings of Diogenes nothing delights me more than his reply to someone who had asked him how he might best avenge himself on an enemy. 'By showing yourself as upright
 25 and honourable a man as possible,' he said.¹³ I wonder what deity inspired such thoughts. But a dictum of Aristotle's too, seems strongly consistent with Pauline teaching. Asked what his philosophy did for him, he answered, 'It causes me to do of my own accord what most men do by compulsion.' For Paul teaches that those inspired by Christian charity are not subject to
 30 the Law, because they perform voluntarily more than the Law could wring from them through dread of punishment.¹⁴

Francis When the Jews muttered against Christ for eating freely even with publicans and sinners, he replied that those who were whole had no need of a physician, but those who were sick had.¹⁵ Not inconsistent with this is
 35 the saying of Phocion reported by Plutarch. When rebuked for defending a worthless rascal in court, he said, no less wittily than kindly, 'Why not, when no good man needs such defending?'¹⁶

Gerard This too is an example of Christian goodness, after the example of the eternal Father who maketh his sun to shine not only on the just but
 40 likewise on the unjust – to do as much kindness as we can, both to righteous and unrighteous.¹⁷

But more surprising, perhaps, will be an example of moderation in a king. Demochares, nephew of Demosthenes, was Athenian ambassador to King Philip of Macedon. Upon dismissal by the king after gaining what he had sought, he was asked politely if there was anything else he wished.

- 5 'That you might hang yourself,' retorted Demochares. This outburst was an expression of hatred; the person thus insulted was a king – and a worthy one. Yet he didn't lose his temper, but turning to Demochares' colleagues said, 'See that you inform the people of Athens about this, in order that when they know the facts they may decide which of us they think the better: myself, 10 who heard it with forbearance, or the man who spoke it.'¹⁸ Where now by comparison are the monarchs of the world, who think themselves equal to gods and because of a word uttered over the wine stir up dreadful wars?

- Jerome** The thirst for glory has tremendous power and is an emotion that leads many men astray.¹⁹ One of these asked Socrates how he could find a 15 short cut to the most honourable reputation. 'By showing yourself to be what you long to be thought,' was the answer.²⁰

James Indeed, I don't see what could be spoken more briefly and more perfectly. Fame is not to be sought after but accompanies virtue of its own accord, as disgrace accompanies vice.

- 20 You admire the men. A girl, a Lacedaemonian, took my fancy. When she was being offered for sale at auction a certain bidder went up to her, saying, 'Well, will you be good hereafter if I buy you?' 'Even if you don't buy me,' she replied; meaning that she did not practise virtue for the sake of some individual, but naturally, for its own sake; because virtue is its own 25 reward.²¹

- Lawrence** A manly saying from a girl, truly. But I consider it a remarkable example of constancy in the face of fortune, however smiling, that when Philip of Macedon received news of three extraordinary blessings on the same day – that he had won a victory in the Olympic Games, that his 30 commander Parmenion had vanquished the Dardanians, and that his wife Olympias had borne him a son – he prayed to heaven with uplifted hands that God would permit so great a prosperity to be atoned for by some slight misfortune.²²

- Albert** Nowadays there's no prosperity so great that anyone need fear envy 35 of it; but if people have had a stroke of luck they boast all the same, as if Nemesis were dead or deaf.

If this luncheon pleases you, the little garden here, which you've dedicated by conversation as pleasant as it is profitable, will provide you with one whenever you like.

- 40 **Bartholinus** Surely Apicius²³ couldn't have served a more delightful dish. So expect us often; only do excuse us for bringing, on this occasion, not what

was worth your hearing but what was thought of on the spur of the moment. When we've deliberated we'll provide richer fare.

Albert You'll be the more welcome for that.

NOTES

- 1 Albert, the host, has nine guests, the favourite number, as we have learned in other colloquies; see 'The Profane Feast' n102. Each guest has at least one opportunity to take part in the conversation. Smith conjectured (*Key* 51) that Bartholinus might be Riccardo Bartolini of Perugia, a scholarly canon and poet who spent much of his life and career in Germany. He corresponded with Erasmus, but whether they ever met is doubtful. See CEBR. Charles could be Karel Uutenhove, who lived with Erasmus for six months in Basel in 1528–9; he appears in 'Knucklebones.' Aemilius may be Emiglio de' Migli of Brescia, who translated Erasmus' *Enchiridion* into Italian (1531) and exchanged letters with him in May 1529, a few months before this colloquy was issued; see Allen Epp 2154, 2165. Gerard was the baptismal name of Gerardus Listrius, who wrote part of the commentary added to *Moriae encomium* in 1515; it was also the surname of Cornelis Gerard, an Augustinian canon and scholar who was a friend and correspondent on Erasmus in the 1490s; Allen Ep 17 introduction. These suggested identifications cannot be proved. Nor are there reliable clues to whether the other speakers here bear names of Erasmus' friends.
- 2 Described by Lucian in *Vera historia* 2.5–14. Cf 'Benefices' n3.
- 3 *ἀοῖσος compotatio*. Cf *Adagia* I iii 3, citing Plutarch *Moralia* 716A *Quaestiones convivales*.
- 4 Boards for dice games or knucklebones. Most of the games played in 'Sport' are ball games.
- 5 Another allusion to a subject Erasmus took seriously and sometimes introduced in memorable passages, for example in 'The Godly Feast' 192:5–194:36; see especially nn187 and 215 there.
- 6 Phocion was an Athenian statesman, orator, and soldier and an opponent of Demosthenes. He was charged with treason in 318 BC and executed by the Athenians. See Plutarch *Phocion* 36.3; *Moralia* 189A–B *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata*: *Phocion* 19. Cf Erasmus *Apophthegmata* LB IV 221B; *Lingua* LB IV 742F–743A / ASD IV-1A 164:558–60 / CWE 29 396.
- 7 For Erasmus' judgments of the mendicant friars in the *Colloquies* see particularly 'The Well-to-do Beggars,' 'The Funeral,' 'The Sermon,' and 'The Seraphic Funeral.'
- 8 *Apophthegmata* LB IV 244E–F, 245E, from Plutarch *Aristides* 7. Like Phocion a virtuous statesman and soldier (he fought at Marathon and Salamis), Aristides served Athens well but through political intrigue was brought down. He was ostracized in 482 BC but recalled from exile in 468 BC. On ostracism see *Adagia* II i 51. Phocion and Aristides were models, for Erasmus and other writers, of men who acted justly and righteously in public life (*De concordia* LB V 485D).
- 9 *per fas nefasque*; Livy 6.14.10 and Horace *Epodes* 5.87. See 'Youth' n33.
- 10 *Apophthegmata* LB IV 157F–158A, and again in *Lingua* LB IV 743A / ASD IV-1A 164:567–70 / CWE 29 396, from Diogenes Laertius 2.21; for the sequel see

- Plutarch *Moralia* 10C *De liberis educandis*. The offender was mocked so much by witnesses of his boorish behaviour that he hanged himself. For other effects of anger, taken from Plutarch *Moralia* 452F–464D *De cohibenda ira*, see *Parabolae* LB I 587D–588E / CWE 23 198–200.
- 11 Virgil *Aeneid* 6.853. Other nations, says Virgil, will win fame for art and science; Rome's mission is to bring peace and civilization, to 'spare the vanquished and overthrow the proud' (*parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*).
 - 12 Marcus Porcius Cato Senior, the Censor (234–149 BC), was famed for his stern moral and political principles, military career, and literary talents. 'Cheek' and 'countenance' are different connotations of the same word, *os* 'mouth,' 'face,' which can mean 'modest countenance' or its opposite, 'impudence' or 'effrontery.' This anecdote in *Apophthegmata* LB IV 263F–264A comes from Seneca *De ira* 3.38.2, where it accompanies a similar one about Diogenes. Other dicta by Cato are collected in *Apophthegmata* LB IV 260A–264B.
 - 13 *Apophthegmata* LB IV 191A, from Plutarch *Moralia* 88B *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate* 4; other quotations from Diogenes in LB IV 172B–192C
 - 14 *Apophthegmata* LB IV 339A, from Diogenes Laertius 5.20; quoted also in *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 827F. There too it is followed by reference to St Paul on the superiority of voluntary compliance over compulsion. See 'The Godly Feast' 189:37–191:37 on 1 Cor 6 and 'A Fish Diet' 682:39–703:25. These two long dialogues contain the best expositions in the *Colloquies* on Pauline (and Erasmian) interpretations of liberty versus legalism or what Erasmus calls Christian freedom as contrasted with 'Judaism.' Aristotle's retort to the question of what philosophy did for him may be compared with that of Socrates who, when someone slandered him and angered his friends by doing so, told them, 'I would be everything he calls me had not philosophy taught me temperance' (*Apophthegmata* LB IV 163D; *De immensa Dei misericordia* LB V 566A). Erasmus does not name his sources, but those were undoubtedly Cicero *De fato* 5.10–11 and *Tusculan Disputations* 4.37.80. 'More justly,' Erasmus adds, 'did the worthy Francis attribute to the divine mercy what Socrates attributed to philosophy' (*De misericordia* ibidem). See 'The Seraphic Funeral' n32.
 - 15 Matt 9:10–13. See 'The Godly Feast' 187:28–188:3.
 - 16 Plutarch *Phocion* 10.2
 - 17 Matt 5:43–5
 - 18 *Apophthegmata* LB IV 196B–C, from Seneca *De ira* 3.23.2–3
 - 19 The theme of 'The Lover of Glory'
 - 20 *Apophthegmata* LB IV 156C. This is in Xenophon *Cyropaedia* 1.66.22 and *Memorabilia* 2.6.39. Cicero quotes it in *De officiis* 2.12.43.
 - 21 This anecdote, one in a group illustrating the virtue and curt speech of Spartan women (*Apophthegmata* LB IV 148E–152A), is from Plutarch *Moralia* 242C: *Lacaenarum apophthegmata*. The same story is told of a young man in Erasmus' *Apophthegmata* LB IV 138C–D.
 - 22 *Apophthegmata* LB IV 191E; Plutarch *Moralia* 105A–B *Consolatio ad Apollonium*
 - 23 Roman gourmet. See 'The Profane Feast' n5.

THE ART OF LEARNING

Ars notoria

First printed in the September 1529 edition.

In this dialogue addressed to his godson, Johannes Erasmus Froben, but intended for all young students of language and literature, Erasmus voices strong doubts about certain fads and fallacies in education and lays down some hard truths about sound learning. Unfortunately his good counsel seems to have had no effect on Erasmus, though it may have been helpful to other schoolboys who read it in the *Colloquies*.

The familiar word *memorandum* refers to what is known and should be kept in mind, 'noted.' *Ars notoria* was a medieval term signifying the 'art' of acquiring knowledge and memorizing it with marvellous facility, an art ascribed to Solomon among others. It carried with it more than a hint of magic and was suspect because of earlier associations with alchemy, occult wisdom, and astrology – demonic arts. Other and less pretentious or esoteric techniques of memorizing also existed. These, principally Greek, were known to orators, philosophers, and authors in antiquity, and later to medieval scholars. For a survey of these various kinds of memory systems see Frances Yates *The Art of Memory* (London and Chicago 1966), which begins with Cicero (*De oratore* 2.86.350–2.88.360), Quintilian (11.2.1–51), and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (3.16.28–3.24.40).

Erasmus was scornful of factitious learning but, like any person of superior intellect and erudition, prized the proper recording and memorizing of texts. To us, note-taking seems a natural, obvious tactic; in fact it was an important innovation. Erasmus wrote careful directions about it (*De copia* LB I 100B–105F / ASD I-6 258:506–269:846 / CWE 24 635–48). A judicious combination of note-taking and memorizing could enable an interested person with a retentive mind to have many topics and passages at his command, available for use in any branch of composition. 'Judicious' is the key word here, because both note-taking and memorizing could easily be abused. Notes were to be taken, Erasmus warned, for preserving and classifying relevant information or ideas encountered in one's reading. But this material had to be organized in notebooks or 'commonplace books,' which henceforth would be the immediate sources of that *copia* or abundance of material so highly prized and effectively exploited by Renaissance writers and rhetoricians (see CWE 23 xxxviii). In like manner memorizing had to be controlled. If a specious system of memorizing promised a quick and easy path to learning, it was fraudulent and useless. 'The Renaissance,' as

R.R. Bolgar writes, 'was the age of memorising. Books were written outlining fantastic schemes for the use of scholars ... [The authors'] ingenuity was misplaced; but their works survive to show the significance which was attached to the learning by heart of isolated facts – facts which could be arranged in lists' (*The Classical Heritage and Its Beneficiaries* [Cambridge 1954] 274–5).

In *De ratione studii* (1512; revised edition 1514), Erasmus sketches a curriculum for liberal education (LB I 521A–530B / ASD I-2 83–109 / CWE 24 666–91; cf *De recta pronuntiatione* LB I 922E–923C / ASD I-4 30:556–31:586 / CWE 26 387–8). This training includes Greek, Latin, 'enough dialectic,' rhetoric, geography, and a smattering of arithmetic, music, and natural science – all by the age of eighteen. When asked whether this is to be accomplished by *ars notoria*, Erasmus' answer is an emphatic negative (*De recta pronuntiatione* LB I 923A / ASD I-4 31:572–3 / CWE 26 388). What is essential is the learning of fundamentals first, and so thoroughly that they will not have to be learned again and again. For such is the true art of learning. The short cut young Erasmius longs for does not exist. Although Erasmus as an educator was patient and humane, desirous of making studies attractive, he never allowed pupils to lose sight of the effort required. In September 1520, Johannes Brassicanus, who appears in an earlier colloquy ('The Apotheosis of Reuchlin'), asked him how to become learned. Erasmus' reply, which Brassicanus wrote down at once, was that one could become learned by associating with learned men, listening to them respectfully, reading their works strenuously, learning these thoroughly, and finally, by never thinking oneself learned (Allen Ep 1146 introduction) – the same advice he gives to Erasmius Froben nine years later.

In addition to studies mentioned in this introduction and in notes to the translation, see Thorndike *Magic and Experimental Science* II chapter 49; Margolin *Recherches érasmienne*s 70–84; *Jeux de mémoire: aspects de la mnémotechnie médiévale* ed Bruno Roy and Paul Zumthor (Montreal 1985).

DESIDERIUS, ERASMIUS¹

Desiderius How do your studies progress, Erasmius?

Erasmius I'm not the Muses' darling, apparently. But studies would go
5 better if I could get something from you.

Desiderius Anything you ask, provided it be to your advantage. Just tell me what's the matter.

Erasmius I'm sure none of the abstruse arts has escaped you.

Desiderius I wish you were right!

Erasmus I hear there's a certain method that enables a fellow to learn all the liberal arts thoroughly with a minimum of trouble.

Desiderius How's that? Have you seen the book?²

5 **Erasmus** I've seen it, but only seen it, because I didn't have the resources of a teacher.

Desiderius What was in the book?

Erasmus Various figures of animals – dragons, lions, leopards – and various circles with words written in them,³ partly Greek, partly Latin, partly

10 Hebrew, and others in barbarous tongues.

Desiderius The title promised a knowledge of the arts within how many days?

Erasmus Fourteen.⁴

15 **Desiderius** A splendid promise, surely, but do you know anybody who emerged a learned man through this method of instruction?

Erasmus No indeed.

Desiderius Neither has anyone else ever seen one, or ever will, unless we first see someone made rich through alchemy.⁵

Erasmus Well, I wish there *were* a true method.

20 **Desiderius** Perhaps because you're reluctant to buy learning at the cost of so much labour.⁶

Erasmus Of course.

Desiderius But heaven has so decreed. Riches in the ordinary sense – gold, jewels, silver, palaces, a kingdom – it sometimes grants to the
25 slothful and worthless; but it has ordained that what are true riches, and peculiarly our own, must be won by toil.⁷ The labour by which wealth so great is achieved should not seem grievous to us when we see many men struggle, through terrible dangers, through countless exertions, for wealth that is both temporary and quite ignoble if compared with
30 learning; they don't always get what they seek, either. And the drudgery of studies has a generous mixture of sweetness, too, if you advance a little in them. Now removing much of the irksomeness depends largely on you.

Erasmus How do I do it?

35 **Desiderius** First, by persuading yourself to love studies. Secondly, by admiring them.

Erasmus How shall this be done?

Desiderius Observe how many men learning has enriched, how many it has brought to the highest honour and power. Reflect at the same time how much
40 difference there is between man and beast.

Erasmusius Good advice.

Desiderius Next you must discipline your character in order to win self-control and to find delight in things productive of utility rather than pleasure. For what are in themselves honourable, even if somewhat painful
 5 at first, prove agreeable by becoming habitual. So it will come about that you will tire the tutor less and understand more easily by yourself; according to the saying of Isocrates, which should be painted in golden letters on the title-page of your book: 'If you are a lover of learning, you will learn much.'⁸

10 **Erasmusius** I'm quick enough at learning, but what's learned soon slips away.

Desiderius A jar with holes in it, you mean.⁹

Erasmusius You're not far from the mark.¹⁰ But what's the remedy?

Desiderius The chink must be stopped up to prevent leaks.

Erasmusius Stopped up with what?

15 **Desiderius** Not moss or plaster but industry. Whoever learns words without understanding the meaning soon forgets, for words, as Homer says, are 'winged'¹¹ and easily fly away unless held down by the weight of meaning. Make it your first task, therefore, to understand the matter thoroughly; next to review it and repeat it frequently to yourself; and in this respect your
 20 mind (as I remarked) must be disciplined so that whenever necessary it may be able to apply itself to thought. If one's mind is so wild that it can't be tamed in this way, it's unfit for learning.¹²

Erasmusius How hard this is I understand only too well.

Desiderius One who is so giddy-minded that he can't concentrate on an idea
 25 is incapable of paying attention for long when somebody is speaking, or of fixing in memory what he's learned. A thing can be stamped on lead to stay; on water or quicksilver nothing can be stamped, since they are always fluid. But if you can subdue your nature in this respect, then, through constant association with learned men, whose daily conversation affords so much
 30 that is worth knowing, you'll learn a great deal with a minimum of effort.¹³

Erasmusius True enough.

Desiderius For besides the table talk, besides the daily conversations, immediately after lunch you hear half a dozen witty sayings, selected from the best authors; and as many after dinner. Now just reckon how large a sum
 35 these amount to every month and year.

Erasmusius Splendid – if I could remember them.

Desiderius In addition, since you hear nothing but good Latin spoken,¹⁴ what's to prevent you from learning Latin within a few months, when uneducated boys learn French or Spanish in a very short time?¹⁵

40 **Erasmusius** I'll follow your advice and see whether this nature can be broken to the yoke of the Muses.

Desiderius For my part, I know no other art of learning than hard work, devotion, and perseverance.

NOTES

- 1 Johannes Erasmus Froben, Johann Froben's younger son, to whom the *Colloquies* were dedicated in the March 1522 edition and again, with a new dedicatory letter, in the September 1524 edition; see 2–3. On confusion between 'Erasmus' and 'Erasmusius,' which occurred in many editions of the *Colloquies*, see 1120–1.

Erasmusius was thirteen when this dialogue was published.

- 2 Many books of this kind existed. If Erasmus had a particular example in mind, it might have been the well-known *Margarita philosophica* of Gregor Reisch (Strasbourg 1503), a summary of the liberal arts; reprinted a dozen times by 1517. It contains many drawings and diagrams. Chomarat proposes the more compact but dense *Logica memorativa: chartiludium logice sive totius dialectice memoria* by Thomas Murner (*Grammaire et rhétorique* 1 516–17). The Strasbourg 1509 edition was reissued in photographic facsimile in 1967 (Nieuwkoop). If this book is typical of those condemned by Erasmus, his aversion to them is easy to understand. Plates and figures in Yates *Memory* show the ingenious and imaginative schemes produced by the *ars notoria*. These illustrations deserve close inspection.

A famous expert on artificial memory was the 'divine Camillo' (c 1480–1544), who devoted much of his life to devising a 'memory theatre.' Erasmus had met Giulio Camillo during his residence in Italy (1506–9; see Allen Ep 3032:221–2), long before Camillo built the celebrated memory theatre. Erasmus did not hear of this wonder until nearly three years after this colloquy was printed. It was then described to him by a friend in March and June 1532 (Allen Epp 2632:174–205, 2657:30–70). Camillo's theatre was a small wooden building filled with images and figures and 'little boxes' purporting to furnish the key to occult knowledge (see plan in Yates *Memory* 144–5). Since Camillo spent so much time on his theatre that he never had leisure to write a book about it, Erasmus' reaction, dependent on hearsay, can only be conjectured; but his sceptical attitude towards even scholastic memory systems indicates that he would not have been impressed by Camillo's project. On Camillo consult Yates *Memory* chapters 6–7.

- 3 Names, signs, or marks that furnish clues to aid one's recollection; a kind of shorthand
- 4 Roger Bacon, the thirteenth-century Franciscan philosopher, is said to have promised a sufficient reading knowledge of Greek and Hebrew within three days (Beryl Smalley *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* 2nd ed [Notre Dame, Ind 1964] 333).
- 5 A recurrent illusion. See 'Alchemy.'
- 6 John of Salisbury charges his adversary Cornificius with boasting that he could make people eloquent and expert in philosophy without any work on their part (*Metalogicon* 1.3; trans D.D. McGarry [Berkeley and Los Angeles 1955] 14).

- For other complaints about teachers and students looking for short cuts see Lynn Thorndike *University Records* 14–15, 16.
- 7 Erasmus tells a story about a Dutchman who went to Paris to learn French and after four days there complained that he had not yet learned to speak it (*Adagia* iv v 55; and see 'Patterns' n75).
 - 8 *Ad Demonicum* 18, quoted in Greek here. It is used also in *De pueris instituendis* LB I 503F / ASD I-2 54:2–3 / CWE 26 324.
 - 9 Or 'sieve,' *pertusum dolium*, the same phrase used by Conradus Goclenius to describe Erasmus Froben's lack of aptitude for studies: 'a mind like a sieve' (Allen Ep 2352:287). See Plautus *Pseudolus* 369 and *Adagia* I x 33.
 - 10 Proverbial; *Adagia* I x 30
 - 11 Erasmus quotes the Greek. 'Winged words' (ἑρμα πτερόευντα) is a favourite phrase in Homer; see for instance *Odyssey* 11.56, 209, 396.
 - 12 These judgments are like others by Erasmus on memorizing. Memory is essential if one is to be a good or even merely competent speaker or writer, but he distrusts and discourages too much reliance on the old classical devices of *loci et imagines* 'places and images' (on which see Quintilian 11.2.17–31) and their later medieval forms, for these techniques burden the mind with anxiety over method and promise more than they can produce. The best training of the memory, he believes, is careful reading and rereading of texts until these are thoroughly understood (*De ratione studii* LB I 522C–D / CWE 24 671:5–25; on the teaching of texts see LB I 522E–530B / CWE 24 672–91). In *Ecclesiastes* (1535) he repeats that learning things by heart should not be thought an acceptable substitute for close reading. When preachers, for whom *Ecclesiastes* was written, must cite or quote many biblical passages, they will do better to read from notes than to depend on memory. Announcing the chapter or source of every scriptural text is unnecessary. Sometimes just say 'as Paul states in Romans' or 'as Matthew says.' The best aid to memory, not only for preachers but other speakers and writers, is strict sobriety of life and concentration on one's reading (*Ecclesiastes* LB v 955C–956B). In the world of printed books, as Erasmus recognized early and profitably, something more satisfactory than 'artificial memory' – the excess baggage of an old scholasticism – is needed. To stimulate memory, thought, and imagination, he recommends copies of paintings (not diagrams or astrological signs), quotations, maxims, and proverbs placed on the walls of a library or study (as in 'The Godly Feast' 205:23–206:25; the galleries of Eusebius' house are covered with pictures as well), or written on rings or cups. He enjoyed Johann von Botzheim's home in Constance, where 'all speaks in paintings that attract and retain the attention' (Allen Ep 1342:341–2 / CWE Ep 1342:377–8). In *De ratione studii* he writes on the value of such visual aids (LB I 522D–E / ASD I-2 118:8–119:5 / CWE 24 671:15–25). To be used successfully memory depends on one's understanding. Visual aids of the right kind give immediate pleasure while reminding a sensitive viewer of their lasting significance; see the introduction to 'The Godly Feast' 173. Erasmus' seal depicting Terminus is another example; see 'A Fish Diet' n118.
 - 13 See the reference to Brassicanus in the introduction to this colloquy. Erasmus Froben had unusual opportunities for such converse because of the presence of learned men in his father's shop and the solicitude of Erasmus and Beatus Rhenanus for his welfare.

- 14 Whether good or bad, nothing but Latin was heard by Montaigne, by his father's orders, until he was six years old (*Essays* 1.26 'Of the Education of Children'; Frame 128–9).
- 15 Erasmus uses the same illustration in *De pueris instituendis* LB I 501E / ASD I-2 49:15–18 / CWE 26 320; and *De ratione studii* LB I 524A / ASD I-2 125:6–8 / CWE 24 675:18–20.

THE SERMON, OR MERDARDUS

Concio, sive Merdardus

First printed in the September 1531 edition.

The asperity of Erasmus' ridicule in this reply to an ignorant detractor of his edition and Latin translation of the Greek New Testament is more readily understood if we recall that his labours on the New Testament met with immediate hostility as well as praise. By the standards of modern scholarship, his edition of the Greek text had serious deficiencies, yet it was a landmark in the history of biblical studies. It provided something new and exciting, a fresh way of approaching and understanding the Bible. Issued by Froben early in 1516, it was the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament to be published; new editions followed in 1519, 1522, 1527, and 1535. The Greek New Testament volume of the vast Complutensian Polyglot Bible (Alcalá 1522) was printed by 1514 but not actually published until several years after Erasmus' edition had appeared. As the *editio princeps*, his edition of 1516 had a symbolic value that is easily perceived when we encounter contemporary reactions to it. The first edition of the whole Bible in Greek to be published, with the Septuagint version of the Old Testament and Erasmus' 1516 text (with a few changes) of the New Testament, came from the Venetian Aldine press in 1518–19. On the Complutensian Polyglot see CHB III 50–63.

The 1516 New Testament was accompanied by the Vulgate Latin text and Erasmus' annotations on both Greek and Vulgate. In the second (1519) and subsequent editions he replaced the Vulgate text with his own original translation. On Erasmus' research and preparation for this project see Erika Rummel *Erasmus' 'Annotations' on the New Testament* (Toronto 1986) 18–26.

In 'The Sermon' Erasmus rebukes the effrontery of a court preacher who had accused him of a perverse explanation of the Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55). Since the sixth century or earlier this canticle has been sung or recited at Vespers and on special occasions in the western church. What prompted the offensive sermon that aroused Erasmus was his interpretation of the word *ταπείνωσις* (Luke 1:48) in a brief note in the 1516 edition and later expanded (see *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 225F–227C; only the first six lines of this note were in the first edition). The Greek text of Luke 1:46–9 in Erasmus' edition is as follows:

Καὶ εἶπε Μαριάμ, Μεγαλύνει ἡ ψυχὴ μου τὸν Κύριον, καὶ ἠγαλλίασε τὸ πνεῦμα μου ἐπὶ τῷ Θεῷ σωτηρὶ μου· ὅτι ἐπέβλεψεν ἐπὶ τὴν ταπείνωσιν τῆς δούλης αὐτοῦ·

ἰδοὺ γάρ, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μακαριοῦσί με πᾶσαι αἱ γενεαί· ὅτι ἐποίησέ μοι μεγαλεῖα ὁ δυνατός· καὶ ἅγιον τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

The Vulgate Latin is:

Et ait Maria: Magnificat anima mea Dominum, et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo, quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes: quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius.

Erasmus' own translation differs from the Vulgate in three places: he changed *salutari* to *servatore*; changed *magna* to *magnifica*; and added the preposition *ad* before *humilitatem* to make the meaning more precise, as he explains at length in the colloquy at 943:38–945:9.

The attack to which Erasmus replies in this colloquy was by no means the first on his 'daring to correct the Magnificat' (see n25 below). We hear of several in 1519 by monks or friars, another in 1528 (Allen Ep 948:94–117 / CWE Ep 948:99–121, Allen Ep 2045:42–54). What was his offence? That he interpreted the word *ταπεινωσις* in Luke 1:48 as *parvitas* 'humble condition' ('low estate' as the Authorized Version renders it), not 'humility,' which would be *ταπεινοφροσύνη*. In the fourth edition of his Greek New Testament (1527) he tells of a certain unnamed Paris theologian, 'in his own estimation the very Atlas of a tottering church' (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 226C), who denounced this gloss, accusing Erasmus of irreverence and of Lutheran tendencies. His interpretation smacked of Lutheranism, his critics contended, because, by exalting Mary's humble condition, he was denying that by her virtue she *deserved* the unique blessing she had received – a typical Lutheran denigration of merits. Erasmus scornfully rebuts this charge in *Annotationes* LB VI 226C–227C, in *Supputatio* LB IX 490E–491A, and in the present colloquy. By insisting on the difference between 'humble condition' in life and humility as a moral virtue, he tries once again to convince an obstinate opponent that linguistic precision and contextual analysis are essential for understanding biblical discourse.

During the Diet of Augsburg in the summer of 1530, a Franciscan called Metardus or Medardus, in a sermon preached before King Ferdinand of Hungary, his sister Mary, and a large congregation, denounced Erasmus for his gloss of Luke 1:48. Of Medardus very little is known. According to Smith (*Key* 51) and Allen (Ep 2408:8n) his name was Medardus von (der) Kirchen. Erasmus learned of his diatribe from a friend who was angered by it, as were others who heard it (Ep 2408). This friend, Adriaan Wiele of Brussels, a secretary of Charles v, joked about the similarity between 'Medardus'

and *moutarde* 'mustard.' Erasmus in his dialogue, besides mocking his critic's ignorance and arrogance, insults him by changing his name from Medardus to Merdardus 'dung.' See n21 below; on Wiele and Medardus see CEBR.

On other passages in the *Colloquies* concerning the Virgin Mary see 'The Shipwreck' n19; 'An Examination concerning the Faith' n42; 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake' nn31 and 75; 'The Seraphic Funeral' n51. For a survey of Erasmus' writings and opinions on this subject see L.-E. Halkin 'La Mariologie d'Erasmus' ARG 68 (1977) 32-55.

HILARY, LEVINUS¹

- Hilary** Good God, what monsters the earth breeds and nourishes! So the seraphic gentlemen² stop at nothing, eh? I expect they think they're talking to mushrooms, not men.³
- 5 **Levinus** What's Hilary muttering to himself? Making verses, I dare say.
- Hilary** How I'd like to stuff the babblers' dirty mouth with dung!
- Levinus** I'll accost the chap. – How are you, Hilary? Not very hilarious?
- Hilary** You turn up at just the right moment, Levinus. I can pour out⁴ this
- 10 distress on you.
- Levinus** I'd prefer that you poured it into a basin rather than on me. But what's the trouble and where do you come from?
- Hilary** From a sermon.⁵
- Levinus** What has a poet to do with sermons?
- 15 **Hilary** I've no objection to sacred discourse, but I've encountered one 'sacred' in the sense that Virgil calls the thirst for gold 'sacred.' And such ravings are the reason I seldom listen to preachers.
- Levinus** Where was the sermon preached?
- Hilary** In the cathedral.⁶
- 20 **Levinus** After lunch? That's when people generally take a nap.
- Hilary** I wish they had all slept for that chatterbox. He's hardly fit to preach to geese.⁷
- Levinus** A goose is a cackling creature. They say, though, that the patriarch⁸ Francis sometimes preached to his sisters the birds, who listened to him in
- 25 complete silence.⁹ But come: is there a sermon even on Saturday?
- Hilary** One is given in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mother; on Sunday Christ is preached. It's fitting for the Mother to have priority.
- Levinus** What was the theme?
- Hilary** He expounded the Cantic of the Virgin.¹⁰
- 30 **Levinus** A commonplace topic.

Hilary Yes, and quite suitable to the preacher,¹¹ for I suspect he's worked up this one theme; as there are said to be priests who know no part of the liturgy except the Office for the Dead.¹²

Levinus Then let him be styled 'Preacher of the Magnificat,' or, if you like,
5 'Magnificatician.'¹³ But what sort of bird was he, exactly, or adorned with what plumage?

Hilary Not unlike a vulture.

Levinus And from what coop?

Hilary The Franciscan.

10 **Levinus** What's that? From so holy a company? Perhaps from the degenerate sort known as Gaudentes, who wear dark dress, whole shoes, and white cord; who – I tremble to mention it – don't shrink from touching money with bare fingers.

Hilary Oh no, he's from the most select set – the ones who rejoice in the
15 name of Observants, have ash-grey dress, hempen cord, and sandals,¹⁴ and who would sooner kill a man than touch money with bare nail.¹⁵

Levinus Not surprising for rose gardens to have briars. – But who brought such a player onto this stage?

Hilary You'd have even more reason to say that had you seen his tragic
20 mask. He was a huge fellow with red cheeks, big paunch, a fighter's frame; you'd have called him an athlete. And, unless I miss my guess, he'd drunk more than a pint at lunch.

Levinus Where does a fellow who won't touch money get so much wine?

Hilary He has a ration of four pints a day from King Ferdinand's
25 cellar.¹⁶

Levinus A badly misdirected bounty. Perhaps he was learned.

Hilary Aside from barefaced impudence and an unbridled tongue, he had nothing.

Levinus Then what was it that tricked Ferdinand into bringing a bull into
30 the wrestling ring?¹⁷

Hilary To be precise,¹⁸ piety and princely liberality. The man was well spoken of, and he'd lean his head on his right shoulder.¹⁹

Levinus Thus Christ hung on the cross. – But was the sermon well attended?

Hilary How could it have been ill attended in Augsburg, in a very famous
35 church, and during a conference of so many monarchs whom the emperor Charles had assembled there from all Germany, Italy, Spain, and England? Not only that, but many men of learning were present at this sermon, especially from royal courts.²⁰

Levinus I'm astonished if that swine could offer anything worthy of such
40 an audience.

Hilary But he uttered much that was worthy of himself.

Levinus Just what was it, if you please? But first I must ask you to tell me the man's name.

Hilary That's not advisable.

Levinus Why not, Hilary?

5 **Hilary** I don't like to do such creatures a favour.

Levinus What, do a slanderer a favour?

Hilary To take any notice whatever is to do them the utmost kindness.

Levinus Give me his name at least. I'll keep it quiet.

Hilary He's called Merdardus.²¹

10 **Levinus** I know that Merdardus very well. Why, he's the same man who at a dinner party recently called our Erasmus a devil.

Hilary You're right. But what he said at a dinner party, even though it didn't go altogether unrebuked, was attributed by the more courteous guests to his tipsiness – something to be written in wine.

15 **Levinus** But what excuse did he make when chided?

Hilary Said he hadn't spoken seriously.

Levinus How could he have spoken seriously when he'd neither brains nor heart?

20 **Hilary** But to me, and to all educated men, it seems intolerable that publicly, in that spot, before such an audience, and – last of all – at so renowned an assembly of rulers, Merdardus should pour out his stinking filth.

Levinus I long to know what he said.

Hilary In a most stupid, raving fashion he denounced our friend Erasmus. This was the gist of it: 'In these times,' said he, 'a certain new Doctor Erasmus – excuse me, I meant to say Doctor Ass²² – has turned up'; and straightway he explained to the people what 'ass' would be in German.

25 **Levinus** That's an awfully funny story.

Hilary Funny? How so? Foolish, rather.

30 **Levinus** But doesn't it seem funny to you for such an ass to call anyone else an ass, let alone Erasmus? One thing I do know: that if Erasmus himself had been present, he would have laughed in spite of himself.

Hilary Yes, the man's as asinine in his stupidity as in the colour of his dress.

Levinus In all Arcadia²³ I don't believe there's any ass better qualified by asininity to eat hay.

35 **Hilary** He's Apuleius reversed. Apuleius concealed his humanity under the guise of an ass;²⁴ this fellow hides his asininity under the guise of a man.

Levinus But nowadays we fatten such asses with cakes and ale, so it's no wonder if they bite and kick anyone they please.

40 **Hilary** 'This Doctor Ass,' he said, 'dares to correct the Magnificat,²⁵ though this song was uttered by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of the most holy Virgin.'

Levinus I recognize the brotherly²⁶ saying!

Hilary And he went on to exaggerate it as if blasphemy in the highest degree had been committed.

Levinus Now my heart throbs with fear. What was the crime?

- 5 **Hilary** Erasmus, he told us, had altered what the church sings, 'For the Lord hath regarded the low estate [*humilitatem*] of his handmaiden,' to 'For he hath regarded the meanness [*vilitatem*] of his handmaiden';²⁷ and this word sounds more derogatory in German than in Latin.²⁸

- 10 **Levinus** But who would deny that it is an accursed blasphemy to call Christ's most holy Mother, a being exalted above the rank of angels, a mean [*vilem*] handmaiden?

Hilary Well, now, what if somebody called the apostles unprofitable servants?

Levinus I'd get the faggots ready for the blasphemer!

- 15 **Hilary** What if somebody called that glorious apostle Paul unworthy of the name of apostle?

Levinus I'd cry, 'To the fire!'

- Hilary** Yet Christ, the sole irrefutable teacher, taught his disciples to speak so: 'When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants.'²⁹ And Paul, not unmindful of this injunction, declares of himself, 'I am the least of all the apostles and not meet to be called an apostle.'³⁰

- 25 **Levinus** But when holy men say such things about themselves, modesty is a virtue; no virtue is more pleasing to God. If somebody else said the same thing of them, especially of those received into the fellowship of the saints, it would be grievous blasphemy.

- Hilary** You've cut the knot³¹ neatly. If, then, Erasmus had called the Blessed Virgin 'the mean handmaiden of the Lord,' nobody would deny it was irreverently spoken. But since she speaks in the same fashion about herself, she both yields to God's glory and shows us an edifying example of modesty; for inasmuch as whatever we are, we are by the bounty of God, the greater anyone is, the more humbly he should bear himself.

- 35 **Levinus** So far we agree, surely. But when these men³² say 'correct,' they mean 'corrupt' or 'falsify.' We must see therefore whether the word 'meanness' [*vilitas*] corresponds to the Greek term that Luke wrote.

Hilary After the sermon I rushed to the book for this very purpose.

Levinus I wait to hear what you found.

- Hilary** The words that Luke, by the inspiration of the Spirit, set down with his own most sacred fingers, read as follows: ὅτι ἐπέβλεψεν ἐπὶ τὴν ταπείνωσιν τῆς δούλης αὐτοῦ. Our Erasmus rendered them thus: 'Quia respexit ad humilitatem ancillae suae,' merely adding a preposition. It is not

lacking in Luke; good Latin style does not reject it; nor is it superfluous so far as meaning is concerned.³³ For thus Terence speaks in *Phormio*: 'Have regard to me' [*Respice ad me*].³⁴ In his Annotations, however, Erasmus reminds us that Luke said 'Look upon me' [*Aspice ad me*] rather than 'Have regard to me' [*Respice ad me*].

Levinus What's the difference, then, between *respicere* and *aspicere*?

Hilary Not very much; but some, nevertheless. He 'has regard to' [*respicit*] who turns his head and observes what is behind him; he 'looks upon' [*aspicit*] who merely beholds, as in Terence, Phaedria 'sees' [*aspicit*] Thais coming out of the house and says, 'I tremble all over, Parmeno, I've the shivers, when I've caught sight of [*aspexi*] her.'³⁵ But his brother Chaerea speaks thus: 'When I turn around and look towards [*respicio*] the girl'³⁶ – for he had faced the old man but turned towards the girl after the old man had finished talking.

Sometimes, however, *respicere* is used for 'be mindful of,' 'attend to,' either of something imminent or present. Thus the satirist: 'Bade him bear in mind [*respicere*] the end of life's long course.'³⁷ For death follows hard upon us, as though threatening from behind; whenever we think of it we 'turn our eyes' towards it. And Terence: 'Be mindful of [*respice*] your old age.'³⁸ Hence one who neglects his children, giving his attention elsewhere, is said 'not to look after' [*non respicere*] them. Again, one who, after other matters have been discussed, turns his attention this way, is said correctly to 'attend to' [*respicere*] a thing. But God beholds [*contuetur*] in a single view all things past, present, and future; and yet in Scripture speaks with us in human fashion. He is said to 'turn away from' [*aversari*] those whom he rejects, to 'be mindful of' [*respicere*] those he deems worthy of his favour, as though they had been neglected for a time.

Luke, however, would have made this matter more clear had he said ἀπέβλεψεν;³⁹ we now read ἐπέβλεψεν. But whichever you read does not affect the sense much.

Levinus Yet repeating the preposition seems superfluous.

Hilary Unquestionably the Latins too speak in the same fashion: 'He came up to me' [*ad me*], 'He directed his thoughts to writing' [*ad scribendum*]. Here the preposition does not seem superfluous to me, for one who happens to glance behind him, gazing at nothing in particular, can look back [*respicere*]; but when you hear 'He was mindful of me' [*respexit ad me*], the special kindness of one who wishes to help this or that person is expressed. Likewise we sometimes 'see' [*aspicimus*] things we come across by accident – things we care nothing about, nay, that we should prefer not to see. But whoever 'looks at someone' [*ad aliquem aspicit*] is especially attentive to what he beholds. Moreover we 'see,' but don't 'look at,' many things at the same time. Thus

the Holy Spirit, desirous of expressing to us the unique favour towards the most blessed maiden, spoke thus through her mouth: 'Because he hath had regard to [*respexit*] the low estate of his handmaiden.' God turns his eyes from those who are mighty in their own estimation and bends his gaze upon
 5 her who was the least in her own sight. Unquestionably there were many learned, powerful, rich, high-born men who expected the Messiah would come from their own stock; but God, rejecting them, directed the gaze of his most merciful favour towards a maiden unknown to fame, poor, married to a carpenter, without even wealth of offspring.

10 **Levinus** I hear nothing yet about 'meanness' [*vilitate*].

Hilary This was the slanderer's word, not Erasmus'.

Levinus But perhaps he mentions 'meanness' in his Annotations.

Hilary Not at all. On the word *ταπεινωσις* he simply notes, quite modestly: 'Take it as referring to humble condition, not to a moral virtue, and the sense
 15 is, "And even if I am the lowliest servant, yet the Lord hath not turned away from me."' "

Levinus If these words are true and wholly reverent, what are the asses braying about?

Hilary Their ignorance of Latin idiom produced these uproars. *Humilitas*,
 20 when used by careful speakers among the ancients, does not signify the moral virtue opposed to arrogance and called modesty,⁴⁰ but an inferior worldly lot – the sense in which we say low-class, poverty-stricken 'outsiders,' and despised people are 'humble,' as though they crept along the ground. Hence, as we say to eminent personages, 'I beg your Highness to grant me
 25 this favour,' so those who refer to themselves when seeking to advance their fortunes usually say, 'I beg you to raise my humble condition by your kindness.' Sometimes emphasis on personal pronouns has a touch of arrogance; for example, 'I say so'; 'I'll do it.' The most modest of maidens, then, did two things at once: she depreciated her own lot and
 30 praised the Almighty's bounty to her: not content with calling herself 'handmaiden,'⁴¹ she added, 'humble handmaiden and of low estate.' As, according to the proverb, 'Servant takes precedence over servant,'⁴² so too among handmaidens one excels another in proportion to the dignity of their service: a hairdresser is more respectable than a laundress.

35 **Levinus** But I'm surprised Merdardus failed to recognize the form of speech, since I myself have often heard Franciscans talk like this: 'My poverty thanks you for the generous refreshment.'

Hilary Some wouldn't be far wrong if they said 'my depravity'! But since the Greek word *ταπεινοφροσύνη* seems to have a broader meaning than
 40 Latin *modestia*, Christians preferred to say 'humility' rather than 'modesty'; that is, they preferred to speak expressively rather than elegantly. For one

who appraises himself discreetly, crediting himself with nothing above his deserts, is called 'modest.' But praise for *ταπεινοφροσύνη* is not appropriate except to one who claims *less* merit than he possesses.

Levinus But in claiming modesty we run the risk of vanity.

5 **Hilary** How so?

Levinus If Paul spoke the truth, 'I am not meet to be called an apostle,' and if Mary was correct in saying she was a 'humble handmaiden,' that is, of very low estate, those who extol either one with magnificent praise run the risk of falsehood.⁴³

10 **Hilary** No danger of that, my good friend. When we shower praise on devout men and women, we proclaim the grace of God in them; when they abase themselves, they have in mind what their strength and deserts would be if divine favour were withheld. And failure to claim what one does in fact possess is not mere lying. If one speaks sincerely, it can perhaps be called a mistake; it cannot be called a lie. But God loves this mistake of ours.

15 **Levinus** Yet Paul, who denies that he is worthy of the name of apostle, boasts grandly in other passages when recalling his achievements. 'I have laboured more abundantly than all of them,' he says, and 'Those who seemed to be somewhat added nothing to me.'⁴⁴ The Blessed Virgin, however, is not
20 reported to have said any such thing.

Hilary But Paul calls those achievements his 'infirmities,' by means of which the power of God is made manifest, and he calls the mention of them 'foolishness' to which he was driven by the wickedness of false apostles.⁴⁵ Because of them he had to vindicate his apostolic authority – not because he
25 himself exulted in human glory but to further the gospel, whose care had been entrusted to him. The same consideration did not apply to the Virgin Mother, for the office of preaching the gospel was not assigned to her. Then too, her perfect modesty and shamefastness were appropriate to her sex, to the Virgin, and finally to the mother of Jesus.

30 I come now to the root of this error. Those who don't know Latin think *humilitas* signifies only an unusual modesty, whereas it sometimes refers to a state or condition, not a moral virtue; at other times it refers to the will in such a way as to suggest a fault.

Levinus Even in Sacred Scripture?

35 **Hilary** Certainly. Here's a passage in Paul for you, in the second chapter of Colossians: 'Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels.'⁴⁶ The expression here is not *ἐν ταπεινώσει*, as in the Canticle of the Virgin, but *ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ*. The passage is somewhat obscure, admittedly, but the authentic meaning in my opinion is
40 that advanced by scholars: 'Do not be so humble and abject in spirit that after you have dedicated yourselves to Christ, the sole author of salvation, you

let yourselves be talked into putting your hope of salvation in the angels who some fancy have appeared. Lift up your hearts, so that even if an angel really does come from heaven and proclaim to you a gospel other than the one Christ gave, he may be cursed by you as a wicked angel and an enemy of Christ. Much less does it become you to be so low in spirit that you let yourselves be drawn away from Christ by imaginary apparitions of angels. To put your hope of salvation in Christ alone is religion; to expect it from angels or saints is superstition.' Paul means, therefore, that it is the mark of a grovelling [*humilis*] and abject spirit to turn away from the heavenly Christ to the pretended appearances of angels; the sign of a low nature to be blown about by every wind of doctrine. Here, you see, *ταπεινοφροσύνη* is taken over to denote a weakness.

Levinus Why shouldn't I see it?

Hilary Once more in the same chapter: 'After the commandments and doctrines of men, which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility.'⁴⁷ Here again *ταπεινοφροσύνη* denotes a fault.

Levinus Clearly.

Hilary Yet in 1 Peter 5 it is used for the virtue opposed to pride, *τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε*,⁴⁸ which we read as: 'Be clothed with humility.' Again in Philippians 2: *τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν*,⁴⁹ that is, 'in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.'

Levinus You've demonstrated that *ταπεινοφροσύνη* has either meaning, whereas in Latin *modestia* would not be used except as praise. But can you show that *ταπείνωσις* is taken as 'modesty'?

Hilary There would be nothing odd about using it in that sense, since nothing forbids our treating submissiveness or lowliness as modesty. But whether you could find it so used in Sacred Scripture I don't know.

Levinus See if it's not taken in that sense in St James: 'Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich, in that he is made low [*in humilitate sua*].'⁵⁰

Hilary Yes. This passage has *ἐν ταπεινώσει*, not *ταπεινοφροσύνη*. But if you argue that here humility is taken for modesty, it follows that we should take exaltation for pride and immediately a double absurdity results. For as one who boasts and brags about his modesty isn't modest, so one who brags about his pride is doubly arrogant.

Levinus What does the apostle mean, then?

Hilary He commends equality among Christians. The poor man is called 'low' because of his shabby lot; the rich man is called 'exalted,' certainly as this world goes, because of the splendour of his fortune. Here the rich man lowers himself to the condition of paupers and the pauper is elevated to

equality with the rich. Each has reason to rejoice: the one is happy that the wants of the poor are relieved by his wealth; the other glorifies Christ, who inspired that thought in the rich.

Levinus Nevertheless the rich man is praised for modesty.

- 5 **Hilary** Perhaps, but *ταπεινωσις* doesn't immediately signify 'modesty' on that account. There are some who, in their pursuit of men's praises, distribute large sums to the poor. Yet each is 'modest' provided true devotion is present: the rich man so long as he does not grumble at being reduced to the level of the pauper for Christ's sake; the pauper so long as he
- 10 does not grow vain over the honour received but gives the thanks to Christ and glories in him. Beyond question *ταπεινωσις* in the Bible is very often used for 'dejection' or 'abasement' due to suffering or the misery of one's lot. Thus Paul in Philippians 3: 'shall change our vile body,'⁵¹ *ταπεινώσεως*. Likewise in Psalm 9: 'Consider my trouble [*humilitatem*]
- 15 which I suffer of them that hate me,' *ταπεινώσω*.⁵² Again, in Psalm 118: 'This is my comfort in my affliction [*humilitate*],' *ἐν ταπεινώσει*,⁵³ which is surely 'in affliction.' There are many passages of this kind which it would take a long time to cite here. As, therefore, *ταπεινός* 'one who is in low estate,' could figuratively be called *ὁ ταπεινόφρων* 'one who is
- 20 modest in disposition,' 'not in the least puffed up,' so there would be nothing extraordinary in one's calling 'lowliness' [*ταπεινωσις*] 'modesty' [*ταπεινοφροσύνη*] – in scriptural use, I mean. But those who argue that in the Canticle of Mary *ταπεινωσις* means modesty of spirit interpret in like fashion, no doubt, what we read in Genesis 29: 'The Lord hath looked upon
- 25 my affliction' (*ταπεινώσω*).⁵⁴ Leah does not boast about her modesty but calls her husband's lack of interest in her (because of her plainness) an 'affliction.' In the same way Deuteronomy 26: 'and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression.'⁵⁵ Doesn't this passage call *ταπεινωσις* 'affliction'?
- 30 **Levinus** Then what prompts these men to interpret *humilitatem* in the Canticle 'modesty of spirit'?

- Hilary** I see no reason except that many theologians have neglected the cultivation of languages and the study of Latin idiom, as well as the ancient Doctors of the church, who cannot be fully understood without these helps
- 35 – a condition very hard to rectify, moreover, once it is firmly fixed in one's mind. You can find some who pay such deference to scholastic opinions that they'd rather distort Scripture than correct human judgments by the rule of Scripture.⁵⁶

Levinus But this is sillier than the saying about the 'Lesbian rule.'⁵⁷

- 40 **Hilary** Bede the monk, not a particularly safe guide when he strays from paths trodden by others, mentions 'pride' in connection with *humilitas*.⁵⁸ But

the Greek writer Theophylact, who usually followed the most approved Greek authors, denies that *ταπεινωσις* can be taken for a virtue.⁵⁹

Levinus What need to prove it from authority when common sense itself rejects this interpretation?

- 5 **Hilary** Right. For though modesty is in some respects the summit⁶⁰ and safeguard of all virtues, to claim it is immodesty. We allow that in the Blessed Virgin this virtue was supreme and beyond comparison – Christ always excepted – but her modesty is the more admirable for this very reason: that she herself does not praise it but, acknowledging her low estate,
10 ascribes the greatness of the mystery to divine mercy. ‘Mary,’ they say, ‘deserved by her modesty to become the Mother of God.’ Let’s grant that this is partially true, but just what sort of modesty is it for the maiden to assert this of herself?

- Levinus** Nay, the very tone of the Canticle indicates that she is speaking of
15 her own unworthiness; and therefore it begins thus: ‘My soul doth magnify the Lord.’⁶¹ But whoever says ‘I deserved by my modesty to become the mother of God’ magnifies herself, not the Lord. Presently Mary adds, ‘For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.’⁶² ‘Behold’ signifies something sudden and unexpected. But one who deems herself
20 worthy of no honour does not expect the highest honour. Nor is it called blessedness if one gets what one deserved. Horace denies he should be called ‘blessed’ on the score of having been admitted by Maecenas to the list of his friends.⁶³

Hilary Why?

- 25 **Levinus** Because he was accepted as the result of a deliberate judgment, not an unearned favour. Maecenas awarded him what he judged was due to Horace’s virtues.

- [**Hilary**]⁶⁴ What follows is relevant, therefore: ‘For he that is mighty hath done to me great things: and holy is his name.’⁶⁵ She did not say, ‘hath done
30 to me great things because he judged me deserving’ but because he is mighty and does whatever he wishes; he makes unworthy persons into ones worthy of his favour, and therefore is his name holy (‘holy’ expressed ‘glorious’). As much as we claim to ourselves on our merits, so much do we detract from the glory of the divine name. For Paul says his ‘strength is made perfect in
35 weakness.’⁶⁶

- Next, in the verse ‘He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree,’⁶⁷ the word is not *ταπεινόφρωνας* but *ταπεινούς*, that is, ‘the despicable by worldly standards,’ as opposed to ‘the mighty.’
40 This verse is illustrated by the following one, in the manner of prophetic eloquence: ‘He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.’⁶⁸ Those she had just now called ‘of low degree’ she here

calls 'hungry,' that is, poor; the ones she had just called 'mighty' she here calls 'rich.' In the next verse mention is made of the mercy poured out upon all peoples.⁶⁹ In the last verse she proclaims the assurance of God's promises: 'As he spake,' etc.⁷⁰ Glory, that is, the power, goodness, and truth of God, is proclaimed by the entire canticle; there is no mention of merits.

Levinus But as pride accompanies wealth and power, so does poverty teach modesty.

Hilary I don't deny this sometimes happens, of course, but you can see plenty of poor people who are exceedingly arrogant. If you deny it, I'll confront you with many Merdarduses! But, granting your point – though it's not always true – the question now is not what kind of person the Blessed Mother of Jesus was but what kinds of things she proclaimed about herself in this canticle.

Levinus I marvel at the obstinacy of those who don't come to their senses, though repeatedly warned and even laughed at.

Hilary How often have they been warned that 'declamation' is the treatment of a *fictitious* theme, used for practising a branch of eloquence!⁷¹ And yet to them a declamation is no different from a sermon. How often has it been protested to them that a 'celibate' is one who has no wife even if he keeps six hundred⁷² concubines. And yet to them celibacy is no different from continence and chastity.⁷³ The same with respect to 'humility' and many other terms.

Levinus Where does so obstinate a stupidity come from?

Hilary As for the Merdarduses, my answer is that they haven't worked at language and literature from childhood and haven't had enough teachers and books. And if any stipend for this purpose does come their way, they prefer to spend it on their bellies. They think their sacred garb quite sufficient to give them a reputation for piety and learning both. Finally, they think sanctity consists partly in knowing as little as Francis did about speaking Latin.⁷⁴

Levinus Indeed I know many who in this respect exemplify beautifully the founder of their order, who said *capero* [hood] for *galerus* [cap]⁷⁵ and also, I believe, *vestimentibus* [vestments] for *vestibus* [clothing].⁷⁶ Yet Francis repeatedly refused the honour of presbyter, as did Benedict and Dominic too, I think.⁷⁷ These fellows nowadays, with their own *vestimentibus*, don't shrink from a cardinal's hat.

Hilary What's that? Why, not even from the triple crown.⁷⁸ And these lowly sons of poor Francis offer their sandals for the mightiest monarchs in the world to kiss!

Levinus Now if 'meanness'⁷⁹ had been mentioned, what dreadful sin would that have been?

Hilary None at all, if by 'mean' you understand one who is slightly regarded by men or seems contemptible in his own eyes. But what need is there to defend what was not said?

Levinus Wasn't Merdardus ashamed to lie in this fashion, and in so famous
5 a church, so crowded an assembly of rulers, in the presence of so many learned men, most of whom had read Erasmus' studies?

Hilary Ashamed, you say? On the contrary, the rascal imagined he had scored a resounding triumph. This is the fourth vow of the tribe of Merdarduses,⁸⁰ a vow far more sacred than those others: to have no shame
10 whatever.

Levinus Yes, most of them are strict observants of that one!

Hilary There wasn't merely a single falsehood. In the first place, the Canticle of Mary, as written by Luke, remains intact. How can one be accused of 'correcting' when he changes nothing? Secondly, the word *humilitatem* isn't
15 changed, nor is there mention anywhere of 'meanness' [*vilitatis*]. Last of all, one who renders honestly what Luke wrote doesn't 'correct' the canticle but clarifies it.

Levinus I perceive a triple lie worthy of an impudent rascal.

Hilary Wait: you haven't heard the most shameless one of all.

Levinus Even worse?

Hilary 'That Doctor Ass,' he bellowed, 'was the head, chief, and leader of the entire insurrection by which Christendom is now shaken to its foundations.'

Levinus What's that you say?

Hilary 'It's his fault that the church is split into so many factions, that priests
25 are robbed of their tithes, that bishops are scorned, that the sovereignty of the sacred pontiff is widely flouted, that the peasants have copied the ancient example of the giants.'⁸¹

Levinus He said this in public?

Hilary With much sound and fury.

Levinus But those who look carefully into Erasmus' books think far
30 otherwise. Many of them testify to having drawn the nourishment of true godliness from his writings. All this fire was started by the monks⁸² and fanned to such a heat by them that even now their attempts to put it out have no more effect than pouring oil on the flames, as the saying is.⁸³

Hilary The worst wild beast is the belly, you see.⁸⁴

Levinus You've hit the nail on the head.⁸⁵ Obviously it suits this sort that there should be as much superstition and as little true devotion as possible among Christians. But what did the congregation do? Put up with the Cumaeen ass⁸⁶ braying so violently from the pulpit?⁸⁷

Hilary Some wondered what had happened to the man. The more indignant
40 got up and left the church,⁸⁸ muttering, 'We came here to listen to praise of

the Blessed Virgin and this sot vomits mere slanders.' Among these persons were quite a few women.

Levinus But as a rule their sex is marvellously partial to this order.

Hilary You're right, but women too have begun to show sense. Most of the
5 learned men present fumed; some even hissed him.⁸⁹

Levinus An ass isn't bothered by hissing. It would have taken rotten eggs or rubbish to drive such a brawler from the pulpit.

Hilary There were some who thought he deserved this, but respect for the place deterred them.

10 **Levinus** But the sanctity of the place should not save those who have profaned it by wrongdoing. As it's not right that those who murder a man within the precincts of a church should find asylum there, so likewise one who grossly abuses both the sanctity of the place and the people's patience in sermons is not entitled to protection by what he has profaned through his
15 own effrontery. The man who rejected as consul one who did not recognize him as senator was praised by the ancients;⁹⁰ nor is it right for the people to accept as preacher one who does not treat them as a congregation.

Hilary They're afraid of bishops' thunderbolts. 'If anyone, by instigation of the devil,' and so on: you know the law.⁹¹

20 **Levinus** But bishops ought to be the first to brandish the thunderbolt against such brawlers.

Hilary They too fear them.

Levinus Fear whom?

Hilary Those very brawlers.

25 **Levinus** For what reason?

Hilary Simply because they *are* brawlers.

Levinus The apostles did not fear the threats of kings and governors; and are these men afraid of a single mendicant?

Hilary But the very fact that they're mendicants makes them more
30 formidable. They've nothing you can seize; they do have means of injuring. Go to a wasps' or hornets' nest,⁹² if you like, and touch any one of them with your finger. If this turns out well for you, come back and call the bishops cowards for refusing to provoke one mendicant. Don't the most powerful monarchs of Christendom reverence – and perhaps fear – the Roman pontiff?

35 **Levinus** No wonder, for he's the vicar of Christ.

Hilary But Alexander VI, a man neither fool nor dunce, used to say, according to report, that he would rather offend some of the mightiest rulers than a single ordinary mendicant friar.⁹³

Levinus Leave pontiffs out of the discussion. When report of this outrage
40 reached the ears of the princes then at Augsburg,⁹⁴ wasn't the fellow punished?

Hilary They were all indignant, but especially King Ferdinand and his sister, Mary (the glory of womanhood in this age);⁹⁵ Cardinal Bernhard of Trent;⁹⁶ and Balthasar, bishop of Constance.⁹⁷ The preacher was sternly rebuked, but by none more sharply than Johannes Fabri, bishop of Vienna.⁹⁸

Levinus What good's a rebuke? An ass feels nothing but a cudgel.

Hilary Especially if you hit him in the belly! But what could the princes, preoccupied by far more serious problems, have done to that blockhead?

Levinus Surely they could have taken away his licence to preach and withdrawn their favour from him.

Hilary But the artful dodger had postponed his poisonous slander until the very breaking up of the council, when they had to adjourn anyway.

Levinus Devils are said to depart in the same manner, leaving a terrible stench behind.⁹⁹

Hilary And so he was dismissed by King Ferdinand, but well fed. Rebukes took not an inch off the fellow's waistline.

Levinus Francis is said to have preached to his sisters the birds.¹⁰⁰ This fellow seems fit to preach to his brother asses and swine. But where did he go off to?

Hilary To the rest of the herd, of course, by whom he was received with loud applause for a job well done, vigorously done; and over their cups a *Te Deum laudamus* was sung for an *Io, triumphe*.¹⁰¹

Levinus This Merdardus fully deserved to have a rope about his neck instead of about his loins. But what curse should we call down on this crass herd that breeds such cattle?

Hilary You could hardly find anything worse to invoke than what they bring down upon themselves, since they are utterly disgraced by these methods and incur the hatred of all good men more effectively than any enemy could contrive. But to wish anyone ill is unbecoming to a Christian.

Rather is it devoutly to be wished that the most merciful creator and restorer of things, who turned Nebuchadnezzar the man into an ox and again of an ox made him a man,¹⁰² and who gave Balaam's ass a human tongue,¹⁰³ would transform all who are like Merdardus into something better and grant them both speech and understanding befitting men of the gospel.

NOTES

- 1 These are former servant-pupils of Erasmus. Hilarius Bertholf lived in his household from 1522 until 1524 and kept in touch with him for a longer period. For an informal, confidential letter to Bertholf see Allen Ep 2581; it was written soon after this colloquy was published. He appears as a speaker in three other

- colloquies; see 'Inns' n1. Lieven Algoet was in Erasmus' service from 1519 until 1526. He too is in several colloquies; see 'Patterns' n33.
- 2 Franciscans were known as the seraphic order, as will be evident in this and another dialogue, 'The Seraphic Funeral.' Seraphim, each with six wings, are the highest order of angels; see Isa 6:2–7 and Dante *Paradiso* 8:25–7; 9:76–8; 28:97–102. In September 1224, shortly before Francis discovered, on his hands, feet, and side, wounds – the stigmata – such as those Christ suffered on the cross, he saw a winged seraph, like a heavenly flame, flying towards him; this was Christ indeed *sub specie seraph*, St Bonaventure says (*Legenda maior* 13.3). On the stigmata see further 'The Seraphic Funeral' nn15–16.
- 3 Cf *Adagia* IV i 38, IV x 98.
- 4 *evomam* 'vomit'; perhaps recalled from Terence *Adelphi* 510 or *Hecyra* 515
- 5 *e concione sacra*; but as Hilary immediately indicates, 'sacred' when applied to this sermon means 'accursed,' as in Virgil *Aeneid* 3.57. *Contio* (*concio*) usually denoted 'assembly' or 'speech to a political assembly' in classical Latin; in ecclesiastical Latin *concio* was the kind of discourse called 'sermon' and *contionator* or *concionator* 'preacher,' terms that became more common in the sixteenth century. See these words in Alexander Souter *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D.* (Oxford 1949) and *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources* prepared by R.E. Latham (Oxford 1965; repr 1980, 1983). Hence the subtitle of *Ecclesiastes*, Erasmus' treatise on preaching, is *De ratione concionandi* (Allen Ep 3036.4; and cf line 144 of the same letter). He insists on the urgency of understanding the differences between secular and religious *concio* or *concionator*, the differences between concern with *verbum hominis* and *verbum Dei* (*De concordia* LB V 477D). *Ecclesiastes* is a long book and was the last one published in Erasmus' lifetime. It has not received the attention it deserves, but see the article by John W. O'Malley, 'Erasmus and the History of Sacred Rhetoric' in *ERSY* 5 (1985) 1–29. *Ecclesiastes* is everything we would expect of Erasmus at the height of his powers: eloquent, learned, instructive, sincere. But, impressive and valuable though it is, it does not have the power of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*.
- 6 In Augsburg. See 941:34–8.
- 7 Cf 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' 505:5–6.
- 8 This title was sometimes used of founders of religious orders.
- 9 One of the favourite legends in the anonymous *Fioretti* or *Little Flowers of St Francis*, a fourteenth-century collection of stories and traditions about the saint and his followers.
- 10 Luke 1:46–55
- 11 The Franciscans were strong proponents of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary; Dominicans opposed it. We hear of this dispute in 'The Seraphic Funeral; see 1007:10–15 and n51.
- 12 A dig at their reputed eagerness to collect fees for their ministrations. See 'The Godly Feast' n288; 'The Funeral' 769:9–11.
- 13 Erasmus' invention. Cf *ἀριστοτελικώτατος* (applied to St Thomas Aquinas) in *Moriae encomium* LB IV 469B / ASD IV-3 156:498.
- 14 *Gaudentes* is Erasmus' term for Conventual Franciscans. He refers to St Francis' admonition (Rule of 1221 chapter 7) that his followers 'should let it be seen

that they are happy in God, cheerful and courteous, as is expected of them, and be careful not to appear gloomy or depressed like hypocrites' (*The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi* trans Benen Fahy, with introduction and notes by Placid Hermann OFM [Chicago 1964] 38; *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St Francis* ed Marion A. Habig [Chicago 1973] 38). Conventuals were originally so called simply to distinguish their churches from parish or collegiate ones, but the name also identified Franciscans who rejected the stricter views of Observants on corporate poverty. Note however Erasmus' comment that 'the most select set . . . rejoice [*gaudent*] in the name of Observants.'

Although Conventuals wore black habits (and still do), and others grey or brown, grey became the official colour in the fourteenth century; whence the common English name of 'Grey Friars' for the order. In modern times the standard colour is brown for Friars Minor, black for Friars Minor Conventual. The earliest Franciscans doubtless went barefoot, as Francis did; later ones commonly wore sandals (*calceis fenestratis*). See 'A Fish Diet' n211. For Franciscans to wear whole shoes (*calceis integris*) was thought a 'crime' (*piaculum*), Erasmus remarks (*Lingua* LB IV 713E / ASD IV-1A 118:31-2 / CWE 29 350), though exceptions were allowed if necessary (see 'The Seraphic Funeral' n76). Franciscans wore a distinctive flax or hempen cord around the waist; hence they were called 'Cordeliers' in France.

- 15 On the interpretation of the vow of poverty, which caused dissension within the Franciscan order, see 'The Seraphic Funeral' n70 and the 'Note on Franciscan Poverty' 1026-32; on touching money, *ibidem* 1009:36-1011:11, with the notes.
- 16 Brother of Charles v and his successor as emperor (1556). When this colloquy was printed he was archduke of Austria and king of Hungary and Bohemia. See 'The New Mother' n9.
- 17 A waste of time; *Adagia* I iv 62 LB II 172B
- 18 Proverbial; *Adagia* III vii 58
- 19 The usual position in depictions of Christ on the cross, but see 'The Seraphic Funeral' n2. Mention of this detail here suggests that the words are ironic, since the preacher fancies himself a defender of orthodoxy.
- 20 A reference to the diet, summoned by Charles v, that met in Augsburg in June-September 1530 to try to settle differences between Catholics and Lutherans. This it failed to do, but it was memorable in the history of Lutheranism, because the statement of faith known as the Augsburg Confession, drawn up by Melanchthon and approved by Luther, was first presented there (25 June 1530). It was rejected by the emperor and the majority of delegates, and attempts at compromise were finally abandoned. The Augsburg Confession nevertheless became authoritative as an exposition of Lutheran faith. For texts see Kidd *Documents* 256-300 nos 112-23. Friends of Erasmus hoped he would serve as a mediator at the diet (Allen Epp 2333:42-4, 2335:19-22), but the emperor did not invite him to attend (Allen Ep 2371:21-2); nor was he eager to go (Allen Epp 2341, 2343:1-4, 2344:19-20, 2347).
- 21 In the first edition, September 1531, the title, running heads, and every mention of the preacher's name in the text have 'Merdardus.' In the March 1533 edition,

running heads have 'Medardus,' but in the text the name is 'Merdardus' everywhere except in the last sentence, where 'Medardus' occurs. The *Opera omnia* 1540 also prints 'Medardus' in the title and the final sentence; elsewhere 'Merdardus.' LB corrects to 'Merdardus' throughout. 'Merdardus' has to be correct, for Erasmus' denunciation of his critic would lose much of its force if the demeaning name 'Merdardus' were changed to something more polite. Erasmus considered that he had no reason to treat Medardus with anything but contempt.

- 22 *doctor asinus*. Erasmus was accustomed to this and similar disparaging labels such as 'Erasmus' and its synonym 'Herr Ass' (Allen Ep 2408:11) and 'Balaam' (Allen Ep 2134:168); 'Errasmus' from *errando* 'erring'; 'Arasmus' from *arando* 'ploughing,' or from *arare littus* 'to plough the seashore,' meaning 'to waste time in useless labours' (Allen Ep 2468:92–3; *Adagia* I iv 51).
- 23 Arcadians had a reputation for being invincibly stupid; *Adagia* III iii 27.
- 24 In the *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass*
- 25 This charge, often accompanied by abuse for his substitution of *sermo* for *verbum* in translating John's Gospel 1:1, had been made against Erasmus since his note on Luke 1:48 in the 1516 New Testament. For a few examples see Allen Epp 948:94–117, 1062:84–5, 1196:382–403 / CWE Epp 948:99–121, 1062:93–4, 1196:413–35, Allen Epp 1805:40–4, 1891:197–204, 1967:139–51, 2045:42–53, 2807:67–73. Elsewhere Erasmus says he heard a learned doctor, unnamed, declare in a sermon that those who presume to correct the Magnificat sin against the Holy Spirit (*Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1018E).
- 26 Erasmus quotes the Greek, ἀδελφικῆν 'brotherly.' Here the word is used ironically of friars, but it can also be taken as 'undelphic,' that is, false or unreliable. See *Adagia* IV x 7, then Allen Epp 1792:16–17, 2956:38–40. I owe the reference to ASD.
- 27 Medardus accuses Erasmus of having written *vilitem*, but Erasmus had not done so; he kept the Vulgate *humilitatem* but took it to mean 'low estate,' not 'meanness' as a moral defect (*vilitem*) as Medardus implies. This misunderstanding is cleared up at 945:10–16.
- 28 Luther translates by 'Niedrigkeit' and 'Nichtigkeit.' See n59 below.
- 29 Luke 17:10
- 30 1 Cor 15:9; see n43 below.
- 31 Proverbial; *Adagia* I i 6
- 32 Medardus and others of his kind
- 33 Luke 1:48 'For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden.' When Hilary states that the preposition (*ad*) added by Erasmus 'is not lacking in Luke,' he refers to ἐν in Luke's Greek text. The Latin preposition is not found in the Vulgate (*respexit humilitatem*) but is needed, he thinks, to make the meaning of Luke's Greek more clear. He insists in the next half dozen paragraphs on the importance, if Luke's language is to be understood properly, of the difference between 'looking upon' in the sense of 'having regard for' and merely 'seeing' or 'having sight of.' Therefore the Vulgate *respexit* needs *ad* before *humilitatem* to make the distinction as evident in Latin as it is in Greek. This is the reason for the annotation in LB VI 225F–227C. The exposition of this point here is typical of many of Erasmus' elucidations of Scripture,

designed to emphasize his conviction that accurate exegesis depends first of all on grammar. When theology deals with the Word as words, it needs the aid of philology.

- 34 *Phormio* 740
- 35 *Eunuchus* 84
- 36 *Eunuchus* 342
- 37 Juvenal 10.275
- 38 *Phormio* 434
- 39 Which has the force of 'looked away from all others to give steadfast attention to one'
- 40 For an elaborate comparison of humility and modesty see John Henry Newman *The Idea of a University* (1873) part 1, near the end of discourse 7: 'Liberal Knowledge Viewed in Relation to Religion.'
- 41 *ancillae* (Luke 1:48), and see *Expositio concionalis in psalmum LXXXV* LB V 548B–C.
- 42 *Adagia* II iii 61
- 43 Erasmus makes the same point, citing 1 Cor 15:9 (used earlier at 943:20–2 above), in criticizing Origen's interpretation of Luke 1:48 (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 1028A–C).
- 44 1 Cor 15:10; Gal 2:6
- 45 2 Cor 11:30, 12:5, 9, 10; 2 Cor 12:11
- 46 Col 2:18. 'Voluntary humility' is the Authorized Version's rendering of ἐν ταπεινοφροσύνῃ (in *humilitate* Vulg). See *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 891E–F and the paraphrase in LB VII 1011C.
- 47 Col 2:22–3; 'in will worship' is the Authorized Version's rendering of ἐν ἐθελοθρησκίᾳ (*superstitione* Vulg). Cf *Annotationes* LB VI 893D–E.
- 48 1 Pet 5:5. See *Annotationes* LB VI 1055E and the paraphrase in LB VII 1099C–D.
- 49 Phil 2:3. See *Annotationes* LB VI 867C–D and the paraphrase in LB VII 995F–996A.
- 50 James 1:9–10; 'in that he is made low' is ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ. Erasmus glosses it as in *humiliatione sive deiectione* in *Annotationes* LB VI 1027D; cf the paraphrase in LB VII 1120A–B.
- 51 Phil 3:21. The Greek of the phrase quoted here is literally 'the body of our vileness.' The Vulgate has *corpus humilitatis nostrae*; Erasmus' translation *corpus nostrum humile* (*Annotationes* LB VI 876A).
- 52 Ps 9:13 Vulg, 9:14 in English version; Greek from the Septuagint
- 53 Ps 118:50 Vulg, 119:50 in English versions; Greek from the Septuagint
- 54 Genesis 29:32. For the key word in this and the next note Erasmus uses the Septuagint.
- 55 Deut 26:7
- 56 Another example of Erasmus' conviction that 'there is no discipline which is more dependent on languages than theology' (*Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* LB IX 85E). Cf *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1026A and, in the *Colloquies*, 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady' n4; 'The Epithalamium' n19. He was equally convinced that scholastic philosophy was no help, and deprecated the temerity of those who set out to interpret Holy Scripture 'untaught and unpractised in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew ... equipped with a few frosty syllogisms and some childish sophistries.' It is possible to come to a right conclusion unaided by the laws of dialectic or Aristotelian principles, but not without knowledge of the biblical

languages. See *Adagia* I ix 55 LB II 354E–355B / CWE 32 212. ‘It is better to pay no attention to some of Aristotle’s pronouncements than to be ignorant of Christ’s decrees’ (*Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 137B / Holborn 162:4–5 (*Methodus*), 304:12–14).

- 57 Accommodating a standard or rule to whim or custom rather than vice versa. The phrase is common and proverbial; *Adagia* I v 93. As for distorting Scripture by employing this ‘rule,’ see *Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 89F / Holborn 204:23–33; *Enarratio in psalmum xxii* LB V 323C.

- 58 In commenting briefly on Luke 1:48, Bede contrasts Mary’s humility with the pride (*superbia*) of Eve, which brought woe upon mankind (*In Lucae evangelium expositio* 1 PL 92 321D). Erasmus, who cites Bede a few times in his *Annotationes*, considered him learned for the times in which he lived, but his style rather dull (*Antibarbari* LB X 1736F, 1738F / CWE 23 105:29, 109:36).

- 59 In his *Enarrationes* on the Gospels he emphasizes that Mary attributed everything to the divine mercy, nothing to herself or to whatever virtue she had. Erasmus quotes the passage in his note on Luke 1:48 (*Annotationes* LB VI 226E–F). On his respect for Theophylact see ‘The Godly Feast’ n181. The *Enarrationes* were translated into Latin by Oecolampadius (Basel 1525). Gerson (on whom see ‘The Shipwreck’ n43) wrote in 1427–8 a vast *Collectorium super Magnificat* (*Oeuvres* VIII 163–534 no 418). This is divided into many parts, including a series of dialogues between master and pupil. Erasmus was acquainted with some of Gerson’s writings, but whether he read this one is uncertain. In its denseness, complexity, and totally scholastic formality it is a composition at the opposite extreme from the manner in which Erasmus addressed such subjects.

Luther too wrote a commentary on the Magnificat (1521), which Erasmus may have read, since it was printed in Latin translation (1525, 1526), but there is no evidence that he did so. Luther’s commentary (WA 7 544–604) is worth notice, however, because his interpretation of Luke 1:48 and Erasmus’ are essentially in agreement. See WA 7 559–60 / LW 21 312–13, where Luther, like Erasmus, rejects the notion that *humilitatem* ‘low estate’ in Luke 1:48 means ‘humility,’ as though Mary boasts of this virtue. ‘That is very wide of the mark, for no man can boast of any good thing in the sight of God without sin and perdition. In his sight we ought to boast only of his pure grace and goodness, which he bestows on us unworthy ones’ (LW 21 313). Luther translates *humilitatem* by ‘Niedrigkeit’ in his 1522 New Testament (WA *Deutsche Bibel* 6 212) and by ‘Nichtigkeit’ in his commentary (WA 7 559). He too agrees that the emphasis lies on *respexit*, not *humilitatem* (WA 7 562–4 / LW 21 314–18).

- 60 *colophon*; *Adagia* II iii 45 (see introductory note CWE 33 392), III x 82

- 61 Luke 1:46

- 62 Luke 1:48

- 63 *Satires* 1.6.45–64

- 64 Hilary] In the September 1531 edition, the edition of March 1533, and *Opera omnia* 1540, the lines from here to 950:5 (‘Because he was accepted . . . no mention of merits’) are assigned to Levinus, whose name is then repeated at line 950:6 before ‘But . . . modesty’; thus he is identified twice as the speaker of lines 949:25–950:7. This awkwardness can be avoided, as in LB, by assigning lines 949:28–950:5 (‘What follows . . . no mention of merits’) to Hilary and the

brief comment in lines 950:6–7 to Levinus. I believe this change is correct and consistent with the roles of the two interlocutors: Hilary the expositor and Levinus the inquirer.

65 Luke 1:49

66 2 Cor 12:9

67 Luke 1:52

68 Luke 1:53

69 Luke 1:54

70 Luke 1:55

71 Erasmus had good reason for this remark, for more than once he had to defend his own declamations – among them *De contemptu mundi*, *Encomium matrimonii*, *Moriae encomium*, and *De pueris instituendis* – from critics who ignored or denied the elementary but essential distinction between intentional fiction and, on the other hand, expressions of an author's personal judgments or opinions. Classical declamation, as Erasmus expected his readers to know, is a rhetorical exercise and should be treated as such. The real difficulty lies with works of art, of imagination, containing dialogue by created characters: are those words the author's own sentiments or simply words appropriate to particular characters and circumstances in the fiction? *Moriae encomium*, for example, is both a work of imagination and in form a declamation. Accordingly it was a pleasure for some readers and a problem for others in Erasmus' time, and even today. See his *Apologia pro declamatione matrimonii* LB IX 105E–112A and his statement on Clichtove LB IX 811F–814D.

72 Ie many; see 'The Funeral' n76.

73 On the meaning of virginity, chastity, and celibacy see 'Courtship' n53 and 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' introduction 279–81; on concubinage, 'The Well-to-do Beggars' n6.

74 St Francis was no scholar and did not pretend or aspire to be one, as we are reminded elsewhere (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 912C; *Supputatio* LB IX 553D). See, for example, 2 Celano sections 102, 189, 194, 195 (Habig [n14 above] 446, 513, 517–19); *The Mirror of Perfection* sections 4, 69, 72 (Habig 1129–31, 1197–98, 1202–4). He knew some Latin, but not enough to satisfy Erasmus. Nor did he strive to promote learning in his order. Yet within a generation after his death (1226), as a historian of the order points out, the Franciscans 'had become one of the most learned institutions in the world' (Moorman 123). The Christian philosophy of Bonaventure added a new dimension to the ecstatic spirituality of Francis. On this theme see A.C. Pegis 'St Bonaventure, St Francis and Philosophy' *Mediaeval Studies* 15 (1953) 1–13.

75 *Capero* was a hood worn by friars and most monks; often confused with a cowl (*cuculla*). *Galerus* or *galerum* was a hat or cap with a broad brim; cf classical *petasus* or *pileus*. A *galerum purpureum* was the 'red hat' distinguishing cardinals (as in Allen Ep 3048:91–2; *De bello Turcico* LB V 365F). When St Francis appeared to Erasmus in a dream he wore no peaked cowl but a hood (*capero*) attached to the back of his robe or cloak, to be used as a rain-hat or in hot or cold weather (Allen Ep 2700:44–5).

76 The point is that, according to Erasmus, Francis mistakenly treated *vestimenta* (second declension, therefore *vestimentis* in the dative and ablative plural) like *vestes* (third declension; dative and ablative plural *vestibus*). I have not found

vestmentibus in the published writings of St Francis. At the end of section 13 of chapter 2 (*De receptione et vestimentis fratrum*) in the first extant Rule (1221), Francis quotes *mollibus vestiuntur* from Matt 11:8 (*mollibus vestitum* occurs in the same verse) and may have had in mind also *mollibus vestimentis indutum* from Luke 7:25. Did Erasmus misremember this passage in the Rule when ascribing to Francis the solecism *vestmentibus*? Francis uses *vestmentum* and *vestis* more or less synonymously, as the Vulgate New Testament does.

- 77 Francis was not a priest, but he was commanded by Pope Honorius to preach (1221) and with his earliest followers received the tonsure (Bonaventure *Legenda maior* 3). Of the dozen earliest Franciscans, none was a priest, but it was not long before priests began to join the order. Erasmus is correct as to Benedict of Nursia (d 550), founder of monasticism in the West and author of the Benedictine Rule, the most influential of all monastic codes of discipline. He is probably wrong as to Dominic; the question is not definitely settled.
- 78 The papacy
- 79 See 943:34–5, 945:10–16 above.
- 80 In addition to poverty, chastity, and obedience
- 81 With this catalogue of contemporary ills compare ‘The New Mother’ 592:17–35. ‘The ancient example of the giants’ refers to the rebellion of the sons of Ge (Earth) who attacked the gods but were defeated by them. Erasmus compares that primeval struggle with the Peasants’ Revolt and the more recent Anabaptist disturbances in Germany.
- 82 Levinus alludes mainly to the power and presumption of the monks, mendicant friars, and other religious clerics whom Erasmus accused of stirring up trouble in church and state. See *Adagia* II viii 65; ‘Charon’ n17, and references in Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 10, 12, 46 for examples. He is very severe on their support and incitement of princes who wage wars of conquest, and on what he regards as their share of responsibility for the Lutheran troubles.
- 83 *Adagia* I ii 9 and 10
- 84 Proverbial; *Adagia* II viii 78. Erasmus quotes the Greek. Cf Paul on the Cretans in Titus 1:12.
- 85 *Adagia* II iv 93; often found in Erasmus
- 86 A fool who passes for a wise man amongst those even more stupid than he is (*Adagia* I vii 12). Another adage relates how the ignorant people of Cumae were deceived by a donkey that donned the hide of a dead lion (I iii 66). The story is in Lucian *Piscator* 32. Cumae, near Naples, was the oldest Greek colony in Italy.
- 87 See Allen Ep 1196:382–423 / CWE Ep 1196:413–56 on the impatience of those who have to put up with over-aggressive preachers. On theatrical antics in the pulpit see *Ecclesiastes* LB v 986E–987F and ‘A Fish Diet’ n219.
- 88 This is what people ought to do: teach such brawlers manners by leaving them without hearers (Allen Epp 1188:8–19, 1196:382–403 / CWE Epp 1188:11–23, 1196:413–35).
- 89 So Erasmus was informed by Adriaan Wiele, who was present when the offensive sermon was preached (Allen Ep 2408:15–16). Nowadays, Erasmus wrote in 1527, listeners to sermons behave better in church than they did in earlier times, even if the preacher says something absurd; the more regrettable, then, is the scarcity of good preachers. ‘If people today, as used to be the

case, hissed and stamped their feet if they disliked what they heard, I am afraid they would not only hiss but stone the preacher' (Allen Epp 1800:221–8, 1891:288–91). On preaching and preachers see also 'The Well-to-do Beggars' nn46, 48.

- 90 Cicero *De oratore* 3.1.3–4; Quintilian 8.3.89. The man who protested the consul's refusal to recognize him as senator was L. Licinius Crassus (d 91 BC); the consul, L. Marcius Philippus.
- 91 'If anyone, by the instigation of the devil' are the opening words of a momentous passage in the canon law decreeing excommunication for any person or persons who 'laid violent hands' on a cleric or monk or other religious; for the text of this decree and the comment on it see Gratian *Decretum* part 2 c 17 q 4 c 29 (Friedberg I 822–3). Whoever committed this sacrilege could be absolved only by the apostolic see. The decree, known as *Si quis suadente*, was first enunciated by Innocent II at the synod of Rheims in 1131, then repeated at the Second Lateran Council in 1139 (canon 15; Tanner I 200). It was a potent manifestation of papal prerogative, important because of its emphasis on the status of clerics as against laity. It concerned everyone, therefore, and became everyday knowledge – as Hilary's remark implies: 'you know the law.' Excommunication was a far from simple penalty, however; the legislation was complex and acquired many interpretations, conditions, and nuances in the analyses of canonists. On these subjects see, besides the older works, the valuable study by Elisabeth Vodola, *Excommunication in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley 1986).
- 92 Proverbial; *Adagia* I i 60
- 93 The pope's comment is reported in Allen Ep 694:28–31 / CWE Ep 694:29–33; then in these lines of the present colloquy and in 'The Seraphic Funeral' 1012:24–5. Burton quotes it in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 'Democritus Junior to the Reader' (I 35). Erasmus may have heard it in his Parisian or Italian years. At any rate it fits, for Alexander had some exasperating troubles with the Dominican Savonarola, whom he excommunicated, and, like other popes, with Franciscans (Moorman 535–6). As is true of tyrants, Erasmus remarks, the mendicant friars would rather be feared than loved, even by kings; popes are afraid of them (Allen Ep 1870:18–21, 1875:150).
- 94 See n20 above.
- 95 Mary of Austria, sister of Ferdinand and Charles V, became queen of Hungary through marriage to Louis II. When he died in 1526, she served as regent for Ferdinand during his first year as king. From 1531 to 1556 she was regent of the Netherlands. She admired Erasmus, who dedicated to her his *De vidua christiana* (1529). See CEBR.
- 96 Bernhard von Cles (d 1539), bishop of Trent and cardinal since March 1530, a trusted administrator and advisor in the service of Ferdinand, was a firm friend and frequent correspondent of Erasmus. In the affair of the sermon by Medardus, however, Erasmus apparently exaggerates Bernhard's reaction. Writing to Erasmus a year after the incident, the cardinal says that he personally heard no abuse by Medardus and that he would not have borne any abuse patiently had he heard it. He promises, though, to make inquiry into the report of Medardus' invective and to let Erasmus know what he learns (Allen Ep 2504:25–34); but if he did so the letter has not survived.

- 97 Balthasar Merklin (d 1531), a successful careerist in the service of the Hapsburgs and the church. He became bishop of Constance in 1530.
- 98 Johannes Fabri of Leutkirch, who became bishop of Vienna in 1530, was another important ecclesiastic whose friendship with Erasmus was mutually beneficial. In the Medardus affair his response was no doubt more pleasing to Erasmus than Bernhard's, since he strongly rebuked Medardus for his impudence (Allen Ep 2503:1–5). On these bishops see CEBR.
Erasmus alludes in August 1532 to a letter sent by Medardus to a person or person at Ferdinand's court, complaining about Erasmus (Allen Ep 2700:26–37). Nothing more is known of the letter.
- 99 Cf 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin' 249:6–9. The devils are *cacodaemones*; see 'The Repentant Girl' n7.
- 100 See n9 above.
- 101 Horace *Odes* 4.2.49–50, as at 'Cyclops' 869:21–2. The addition of 'over their cups' sets off neatly the ironical juxtaposition of the *Te Deum* of Christian praise and the exclamation of pagan pride.
- 102 Dan 4:30–7
- 103 Num 22:21–31

THE LOVER OF GLORY

Philodoxus

First printed in the September 1531 edition.

Desire and glory and pursuit of fame may be, as Montaigne tells us, the most universal of illusions (*Essays* 1.41 'Of Glory'; Frame 187), but he reminds us of Cicero's remark that even philosophers who write exhortations to scorn ambition take care to inscribe their names on the title-page (*Pro Archia* 11.26; *Tusculan Disputations* 1.15.32–5). The idea of imperishable human glory was almost obsessive in some of the ancient Greek and Roman heroes, statesmen, and poets. Much the same might be said of comparable figures in the late medieval and Renaissance societies in which Erasmus lived. In Dante, then in Petrarch and many others, we find recurrent concern in their poetry and eloquence with glory and fame. Whether this longing for immortality was prompted by heroic deeds or artistic achievements, it took many forms of expression. At its best, noble ambition could inspire the famous lines (70–84) in Milton's *Lycidas* beginning 'Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise.' At the other extreme, ambition can be, as it is for Philodoxus in this colloquy, an incurable itch for recognition in one who is 'sick and tired of obscurity.'

Admiration and study of antiquity had much to do with the prevalence or popularity of this theme, as had social and political conventions and perhaps facets of personality now only partially perceived or understood. Jacob Burckhardt gave passing attention to the subject in his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* trans S.G.C. Middlemore (Vienna c 1937) 75–80, but for extensive historical and critical treatment see Alberto Tenenti *Il senso della morte e l'amore della vita nel Rinascimento* (Rome 1957); O.B. Hardison Jr *The Enduring Monument: The Idea of Praise in Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice* (Chapel Hill 1962); Françoise Joukovsky *La gloire dans la poésie française et néolatine du xvi^e siècle* (Geneva 1969).

In some of his dialogues and moral essays Erasmus examines the thirst for fame or, on a somewhat lower plane, the winning of deserved esteem. His wisdom on such subjects is both typical and practical, usually a restatement of classical or Christian ethics or both as occasion serves. In 'The Lover of Glory' – an exception in this respect – all names and allusions and examples or anecdotes are classical, save for a short reference to behaviour in church and at the end to Christ. Moralistic observations are often enlivened, as in *Moriae encomium* and letters and colloquies, by amusing or satirical sketches of men and manners. 'The Lover of Glory' has sound and interesting comment on

social customs, but because it is more homiletic than dramatic it does not equal the more familiar dialogues. In some respects it is the counterpart of 'The Knight without a Horse,' where an unprincipled and untalented pretender receives ironic advice about how to get on in the world. Here an honest but rather naïve inquirer is shown the nature of true glory. He needs, and hears from Symbulus, the Socratic counsel, that the best and only way to any fame worth having is to strive to be what one wishes to be thought. For princes and others in far more exalted stations than that of Philodoxus, fame may seem easier to attain, yet has its own risks. Rulers are exposed to flattery by everyone almost from birth, and consequently are liable to pride, overconfidence, and disaster. See *Institutio principis christiani* LB IV 561A–616F / ASD IV-1 136–219 / Born / CWE 27 205–88.

For Erasmus' testimony about his own attitude towards fame and glory we may compare a few words in a letter of July 1514 with a long passage in one written nearly a year later. In the earlier letter he tells Servatius Rogerus, the prior at Steyn, 'I haven't the slightest passion for fame' (Allen Ep 296:52–3 / CWE Ep 296:54). In the 1515 letter, defending himself against Maarten van Dorp's criticism of *Moriae encomium*, he protests that he has no interest in fame or reputation won by injuring others. His sole desire is that his books be useful (Allen Ep 337:26–35 / CWE Ep 337:29–38). He is confident that they serve the cause of learning and piety. He defended them when doing so seemed necessary, but although sensitive to attacks, he was not vain or boastful.

PHILODOXUS, SYMBULUS¹

Philodoxus Symbulus, I interpret this running into you as a lucky omen.

Symbulus I only wish there were some way I could bring you luck,

5 **Philodoxus.**

Philodoxus What's more auspicious than for god and man to meet?

Symbulus Nothing, I'm sure, even if six hundred² owls³ flew about. But what god do you mean?

Philodoxus I mean you, Symbulus.

10 **Symbulus** Me?

Philodoxus Yes, you.

Symbulus I never thought gods who went to stool were worth anything.⁴

Philodoxus If the proverb 'Whoever helps a man is a god'⁵ doesn't lie, you can be a god to me.

15 **Symbulus** Let others see to the trustworthiness of the proverb; for my part, I'm certainly eager to do a friend a favour if I can.

Philodoxus You've nothing to fear, Symbulus – I won't touch you for a loan. Counsel is a holy thing;⁶ just help me with that.

Symbulus But this *is* asking for a loan, since between friends service of this kind ought to be mutual, just as everything else should.⁷ But what's the
5 subject on which you want my advice?

Philodoxus I'm sick and tired of obscurity; I want to be famous. Show me how.

Symbulus Look, here's a quick, easy way for you: imitate Erostratus, who set fire to the temple of Diana;⁸ or one very much like him, Zoilus, who
10 railed at Homer;⁹ or think up some other memorable crime, and you'll be renowned¹⁰ along with the Cecropes¹¹ and Neros.

Philodoxus Others may win a reputation by wickedness; I covet an honourable name.

Symbulus Then show yourself the sort of person you wish to be thought.¹²

15 **Philodoxus** But many persons of exceptional virtue are unknown to fame.

Symbulus Whether that's true I don't know; but even if it should be as you say, virtue is its own lavish reward.¹³

Philodoxus You're right, and you put it quite philosophically. Still, as this world goes, I think glory is the special ornament of virtue,¹⁴ which delights
20 in recognition, just as the sun loves to shine, and for the same reason: to benefit as many people as possible and to allure as many as possible to imitate it. Finally, I don't see how parents could leave to their children a more splendid inheritance than the immortal memory of a glorious name.¹⁵

Symbulus As I see it, you want the glory that comes from virtue.

25 **Philodoxus** Of course.

Symbulus Then take as models those who are celebrated in everyone's writings: Aristides, Phocion, Socrates, Epaminondas, Scipio Africanus, the two Catos (Cato the Elder and Cato of Utica), Marcus Brutus, and other such
30 men, who strove in peace and war to serve the commonwealth as well as they could. For here is glory's most fertile field.¹⁶

Philodoxus But of those famous men, Aristides was ostracized, Phocion and Socrates drank hemlock, there was a demand for Epaminondas' head, as for Scipio's too, Cato the Elder was forty times a defendant, Cato of Utica took his own life, and so did Brutus. I'd want a glory unstained by envy.

35 **Symbulus** But Jove did not grant that even to his son Hercules, for after conquering so many monsters by his valour Hercules had his greatest and most desperate struggle with the serpent.

Philodoxus I'll never envy Hercules his glorious labours. I simply count those men fortunate who acquire a reputation unstained by envy.¹⁷

40 **Symbulus** You want to live pleasantly, I see; for that reason you fear envy. You're not mistaken about that, for it's the worst wild beast of all.

Philodoxus Yes.

Symbulus Therefore 'Spend your life keeping out of sight.'¹⁸

Philodoxus But that's to be dead, not alive.

Symbulus I understand what you're after: you love to walk in the brightest
5 sunlight without any shadow.

Philodoxus Impossible.

Symbulus Equally impossible to attain glory that is unstained by envy. Glory follows of its own accord upon good deeds; envy accompanies glory.¹⁹

Philodoxus But the old comic poet teaches us that glory can come without
10 envy: 'so that you may very easily gain a reputation without incurring jealousy and win friends.'²⁰

Symbulus If you're content with the praise that young Pamphilus²¹ won by complaisance and courtesy, you can look to the same source whence you plucked that sentiment for the means of getting what you seek. In
15 everything remember: 'Nothing too much,'²² but moderation in all things.²³ Be good-natured about putting up with other people's ways; wink at their lighter faults; don't be inflexible and over-insistent on your own opinion but accommodate yourself to others' inclinations; insult nobody, but show yourself agreeable to all.²⁴

Philodoxus Most persons are partial to youth, and it's not too hard to win
20 this praise when you're young; but I long for some glorious fame that will echo throughout the whole world, grow even brighter with age, and shine still more brilliantly after my death.

Symbulus Truly I commend this noble nature of yours, Philodoxus. But if
25 you want the glory that comes of virtue, the principal virtue is to give no thought to glory; and the highest praise is not to court praise, which is more likely to follow the man who shuns it. Beware, then, lest the more eagerly you aim at it the more you miss it.

Philodoxus I'm not a dispassionate Stoic;²⁵ I'm subject to human feelings.

Symbulus If you claim to be a man and would not reject what goes with the
30 human lot, why seek what even a god cannot have? For you know that saying of Theocritus, one as true as it is witty, that 'Jove can't please everyone either by rain or by fair weather.'²⁶

Philodoxus Where there's smoke there's fire,²⁷ perhaps; yet there *are*
35 smokeless fires.²⁸ If human glory cannot be won without being darkened by some shadow of envy, still there are ways, I suppose, of keeping the proportion of envy to a minimum.

Symbulus Then you'd like these to be pointed out to you?

Philodoxus Very much.

Symbulus Be modest about displaying your virtue and you'll be the less
40 troubled by spite.

Philodoxus But glory isn't glory unless it's conspicuous.

Symbulus Look, here's an infallible way for you: perform some splendid deed and die; you'll be renowned without envy, along with the Codri, Menoecii, Iphigenias, Curtii, and Decii.²⁹ 'Envy feeds on the living, but after death it sleeps.'³⁰

Philodoxus Well, to be perfectly frank, I wish to leave my children and grandchildren the inheritance of a good name, but I should like to enjoy the fruit of it for a while in my lifetime.

Symbulus Come, I won't keep you in suspense any longer. The surest path to celebrity is to deserve well:³¹ of individuals in your private life and of all men in your public life. This is partly a matter of services, partly of liberality. Liberality must be so tempered that you aren't compelled to take from some what you bestow on others, for grants of this kind receive more disapproval from good men than approval from bad. And praise from bad men is more truly infamy than glory. Furthermore, the stream of benefaction is dried up by dispensing gifts. Kindness that consists of services has no bottom; rather, the more generously it is used up, the more abundantly it flows. There are many mitigations of envy and enhancement of fame that nobody can achieve for himself; they come by the free grace of God. 'More pleasing valour when with beauty joined,'³² but physical beauty is within no one's gift. High birth carries much dignity with it, but this too is the gift of Fortune. The same view must be taken of wealth which, well got, has descended to us from grandparents and remote ancestors; not even this can be achieved by oneself. The same with cleverness, pleasing speech, gentleness, and affability; they are inborn, not acquired. Finally, there is a certain mysterious propriety, nay felicity, whose effect we see every day in many persons.³³ No one can explain it. Don't we often observe that when the same things are said or done by various people, one who spoke or acted worse wins much favour while one who performed better is hissed instead of applauded? The ancients attributed this quality to one's 'genius,'³⁴ for they used to say everyone is lucky in the particular thing he was born for; on the other hand, what one attempted 'contrary to Minerva's wishes,'³⁵ and those of his presiding genius would come to little.

Philodoxus There's no room here for advice, then?

Symbulus Scarcely any. But those who are capable judges discern in young men certain signs by which it may be divined which pursuits or callings or careers they are suited for.³⁶ Similarly we have a certain hidden instinct that prompts us to avoid some things for no apparent reason and to be irresistibly attracted by others.³⁷ This is why one man succeeds in the military profession, another in public affairs; another, you would say, was born to be a scholar. Yet there is also a wonderful diversity within each of

these professions – as great as among the professions themselves. Nature bore one man to command; another to be a brave soldier; to one whom she richly endowed she granted that, in Homer's words, he should be equally distinguished as spearman and general.³⁸ In civil affairs, likewise, one excels
 5 in counsel, another in pleading cases, another likes to go on embassies and does the work successfully. What need is there to mention the diversity of interests? Some men are so captivated by a monastic rule – not by just any rule whatever but by a particular one – that they think life bitter unless they attain their heart's desire.³⁹ On the other hand, some have such an
 10 extreme distaste for it that they would rather die than become monks – not from perversity or for a definite reason but because of some inexplicable, instinctive feeling.

Philodoxus What you say is true of a good many persons. I've encountered it more than once and I've often wondered at it.

15 **Symbulus** If, therefore, pride and display are absent, those goods freely bestowed on us by the bounty of nature will occasion much less envy. Beauty or rank or wealth or eloquence is more amiable in those who seem unaware of their superiority in these endowments. Courtesy and modesty do not diminish these advantages at all but add a grace, just as they dispel envy.
 20 Moreover, this courtesy and gentleness should be constant in all the actions of life, unless Minerva flatly opposes;⁴⁰ for it was useless, I imagine, for Xenocrates to try what worked so well for Socrates and Diogenes, useless for Cato the Censor to try what made Laelius popular.⁴¹ Yet Terence's Demea showed plainly enough by his sudden change how important it is
 25 to humour everyone's inclinations and feelings for the purpose of gaining good will.⁴²

But whenever the right is compromised, true glory degenerates to transient popularity. Enduring glory is the kind that is rooted in virtue and served by the judgment of reason. Feelings hold sway for a time, but as soon
 30 as they fade we begin to detest what pleased us so strongly before, and accordingly applause changes to hissing, praise to blame. An innate tendency can't simply be reversed, true, but it can be to some degree corrected.

Philodoxus I'm waiting for what you may add.

35 **Symbulus** A man who is naturally congenial can take care not to stray from honour while trying to be agreeable with everyone,⁴³ and not to be untrue to himself while, like the cuttlefish,⁴⁴ accommodating himself to every circumstance.

Philodoxus I've known many such slippery fellows, and so false they ought to be ashamed.

40 **Symbulus** Again, those who are naturally stern should try to unbend, but in such a way that their behaviour does not appear insincere or that they

don't from time to time revert to their former nature; for instead of praise this would bring a double disgrace upon them: for behaving too strictly at times and for being inconsistent. So powerful is consistency that persons who have developed a bad streak are nevertheless tolerated more readily
 5 because they're 'always themselves'! But deceit, even when well-intentioned, causes dislike the instant it's found out. Furthermore, pretence can't escape detection forever; some day it must come to light, and once it does – all that fine glory vanishes into thin air and becomes a byword.

Philodoxus Then (as I see it) you advise me to depart very little from nature
 10 and least of all from honour.

Symbulus That's right. You know, too, that whatever comes suddenly into the limelight is exposed to jealousy. Hence the pejorative term *νεόπλουτοι* with the Greeks,⁴⁵ 'new men' with the Romans, 'upstarts' and 'people fallen from the sky' with both.⁴⁶ But fame that grows gradually is the hardest, just
 15 as it is the least subject to envy, as Horace, the shrewdest of poets, declares: 'Through course of time, by silent growth, / Marcellus' glory thrives.'⁴⁷ If, then, you seek glory which is genuine, lasting, exposed as little as possible to envy, listen to Socrates, who said it often happens that those who start too fast finish out of the running.⁴⁸

20 **Philodoxus** But man's life is short.

Symbulus Therefore strive to do good, not to win glory, which comes of its own volition. It's not long life you're after, I suppose, for that's the gift of the Fates who spin the thread and cut it when they deem best.

Philodoxus Would that you could help me in this too!

25 **Symbulus** Never, Philodoxus, have the gods been so generous as to bestow all gifts on one man. What they take away in years they requite by a glorious name. Some men, but very few, they favour so lavishly that these while yet alive – surviving themselves, as it were – enjoy their posthumous fame. But those 'whom a kind Jove loved' are few and far between. Some, 'the
 30 offspring of gods,'⁴⁹ have perhaps attained to this state, but that blessedness isn't relevant to this discussion.

Philodoxus Often I fall to wondering at the spitefulness of Nature or of Fortune, which grants mortals nothing entirely advantageous without offsetting it by some disadvantage.

35 **Symbulus** Then what's the conclusion, my friend, except that since we're born mortal men, we must bear with equanimity the mortal lot? Now you can alleviate envy to no small degree if you keep firmly in mind the characteristics of nations, classes, and individuals you've observed⁵⁰ – if, in fact, you imitate those who undertake to keep and train wild animals,
 40 since their main concern is to mark what enrages or calms the beast. I don't mean merely the difference between bird and quadruped, snake and fish, or

between eagle and vulture, elephant and horse, dolphin and seal, viper and asp, but the endless variety existing in every genus of animal.⁵¹

Philodoxus What comes next? I'm waiting.

- 5 **Symbulus** Dogs are all included in one species, but this species is divided into so many types that you'd say they were identified by genera, not species. Now in the very same species, how various are the tempers and characteristics of dogs?

Philodoxus There's an enormous variation.

- 10 **Symbulus** Suppose what's been said of dogs to apply to every kind of animal. In none does more difference show up than in horses.

Philodoxus True, but what of it?

- 15 **Symbulus** Reflect that whatever variation there is in kinds or classes of animals, or in individual ones, all this exists in mankind. There you'll find different sorts of wolves, dogs of indescribable variation, elephants, camels, asses, lions, sheep, vipers, apes, serpents, eagles, vultures, swallows, and what not else?

Philodoxus What of it?

Symbulus No animal is so wild that it can't be tamed for some use or at least rendered harmless.

- 20 **Philodoxus** I don't yet see what you're driving at.

Symbulus Isn't there a difference between Spaniard, Italian, German, Frenchman, and Englishman?⁵²

Philodoxus Surely.

- 25 **Symbulus** What's more, each individual in any one group has some particular characteristic.

Philodoxus Granted.

Symbulus If you observe this variation shrewdly and allow for individuals' traits, you'll succeed easily in making friends of them all, or at any rate you won't make enemies.

- 30 **Philodoxus** If you bid me turn into a cuttlefish,⁵³ where's right and honour?

- 35 **Symbulus** In everyday affairs there's a conformity that by no means violates honour. In Italy, for example, men greet men with a kiss; if you did the same in Germany it would seem ridiculous – instead of a kiss they give you the right hand. Again, in England men kiss women by way of greeting, even in church; if that happened in Italy it would be considered an outrage.⁵⁴ Likewise, in England good manners call for offering your cup to someone who arrives when you're dining; in France this is an insult.⁵⁵ In this and in other such matters it's perfectly proper to do as everybody else does.

- 40 **Philodoxus** But it's so hard to understand national customs and individual traits.

Symbulus All the same, Philodoxus, if you seek surpassing glory, glory derived from virtue, you must also practice uncommon virtue. You know that 'virtue dwells with hardships,' as Hesiod taught⁵⁶ before the Peripatetic.⁵⁷ So if you want honey, you must put up with bees.

- 5 **Philodoxus** I know and I remember. But we're looking for a means of alleviating envy.

Symbulus Then see that in war you prefer to be a general rather than a private, and that the fighting in that war be against a hated enemy rather than fellow citizens or allies. In political life it's very important to hold
10 offices that win friends and good will; for example, it's more conducive to popularity to defend than to prosecute, to confer honours than to punish. But if – as is bound to happen – you can't dodge duties that by their very nature cause resentment, you can nonetheless temper them with courtesy.⁵⁸

Philodoxus How?

- 15 **Symbulus** If you act as judge or arbitrator, one side has to lose; but you should so conduct the case that (if this be possible) even the loser may have cause to thank you.

Philodoxus How so?

Symbulus Suppose there's a charge of theft or sacrilege. If possible, change
20 the indictment and make it a case of disputed claim; by doing so you help the defendant without injuring the plaintiff. Furthermore, tone down the whole charge so as to be fair to the defendant without loss to the plaintiff. Last of all, lighten the convicted man's punishment somewhat. Avoid a forbidding look or sharp speech or peevishness, which cause some persons to be less
25 grateful for a favour received than others are when one is refused. At times a friend must be reproved, but if there's no hope of reforming him it's better to keep quiet. If the matter's fairly serious and there is hope of improvement, the kind of rebuke used makes a lot of difference. Often one who rebukes clumsily or unseasonably only makes matters worse and turns a friend into
30 an enemy.

Tact is even more important if you're dealing with a prince, for there are times when their whims must be resisted.⁵⁹ But if this is done cleverly and adroitly, those who resisted will shortly get more thanks than those who complied. What satisfies desire is transitory; what is done with right reason
35 is approved forever.

For the most part, bad feeling is the result of reckless speech.⁶⁰ How much hatred is sometimes aroused by a single word rashly uttered! How often has an ill-timed witticism or joke had fatal consequences! Praise, therefore, but praise those who deserve it, and do this sparingly; but censure
40 more sparingly still. However, if somebody must be blamed at all, don't be long-winded, since it's very hard to talk long and well at the same time.

Philodoxus I agree with all of this, but I think writing books is an excellent way to become famous.

Symbulus True enough, unless a mob of scribblers blocks your path. But if this method attracts you, take care to write precisely rather than profusely.

- 5 Be especially careful to choose a topic that isn't trite or hackneyed; also one that's as inoffensive as possible. Bring to it whatever choice material you've collected from long years of reading, and by your treatment produce something that combines pleasure and instruction.

Philodoxus You'll have given me sound and agreeable advice indeed,

- 10 **Symbulus**, if you'll add one thing: how glory can be gained in a hurry. I see many men who are scarcely known to fame by the time they die, and some – as the saying goes – are noticed only after they're buried.

Symbulus On this subject I've no better advice than the piper's to his partner: 'Be on good terms with those whose reputation is already high

- 15 and who are free of envy. Win the friendship of those whose approval will readily bring you popularity.'⁶¹

Philodoxus But what remedy have you to offer if envy does appear after a while?

Symbulus Act like people who boil pitch: if it bursts into flames they pour

- 20 water on it. And the fire rages and roars all the more if you don't do so often and regularly.

Philodoxus What riddle is this?

Symbulus Stamp out incipient envy by kindnesses instead of revenge.

Hercules accomplished nothing by cutting off the Lernaean hydra's heads;⁶²

- 25 he overcame the fatal monster with Greek fire.

Philodoxus But what do you call Greek fire?

Symbulus What blazes even in water.⁶³ Whoever is injured by evildoers but does not cease to deserve well of everyone uses this fire.⁶⁴

Philodoxus What's this I hear? So kindness is fire at one moment, water the

- 30 next?

Symbulus Why not? Since allegorically Christ is now sun, now fire, now a jewel.⁶⁵ I've spoken in earnest. If you find something better, follow that and disregard my advice.

NOTES

1 'Lover of glory' and 'counsellor'

2 Innumerable; see 'The Funeral' n76.

3 Night-owls (*noctuae*), sacred to Minerva (the Greek Athena) and therefore a favourable omen; *Adagia* I i 76

4 *nunquam feci pili*, literally 'I never cared a hair about'; *Adagia* I viii 4

- 5 *Adagia* I i 69, one of the best in the first part of the collection
 - 6 *Adagia* II i 47
 - 7 For 'friends have all things in common' (*Adagia* I i 1 and 2)
 - 8 Or Herostratus. His mad ambition to win immortal fame led him to set fire to the famous temple of Diana in Ephesus. By general agreement his name was never mentioned thereafter. See Valerius Maximus 8.14 ext 5; Gellius 2.6.18; Erasmus *Parabolae* CWE 23 224:26–30, from Pliny *Naturalis historia* 36.95; Allen Ep 1053:204–5 / CWE Ep 1053:220–1, Allen Ep 1967:52–3.
 - 9 Zoilus was notorious for the asperity of his criticism; *Adagia* II v 8.
 - 10 Greek in the original: ἀοίδιμος, which means 'famed' in song and story, whether in a good or bad sense. Here the association with Cecropes and Neros makes the meaning clear.
 - 11 Monsters, since their ancestor Cecrops, legendary first king of Athens, had a body terminating in serpents (Ovid *Metamorphoses* 14.86–100)
 - 12 *Apophthegmata* LB IV 156C (from Xenophon *Cyropaedia* 1.66.22 and *Memorabilia* 2.6.39, quoted in Cicero *De officiis* 2.12.43) and *Modus orandi Deum* LB V 1117A.
 - 13 Cf 'The Sober Feast' 928:20–5 and n20.
 - 14 Cf *Adagia* IV viii 68 and 71, v i 83.
 - 15 See 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin' n10.
 - 16 On Aristides see *De copia* CWE 24:391:4n and 'The Sober Feast' n8; on Phocion, CWE 24 391:3n and 'The Sober Feast' n6; on Socrates 'The Godly Feast' 194:1–6, 23–34 and 'The Sober Feast' nn10 and 20. Epaminondas (420–362 BC) was a famous Theban general; see Plutarch's life of him. On Scipio Africanus Major (226–183 BC), victor over the Carthaginians in Spain, see 'The Profane Feast' n139; on Scipio Africanus Minor, who besieged and destroyed Carthage in 146 BC, see 'Copiousness' n17. Cato the Elder, the Censor (234–149 BC), soldier, statesman, and author, is the principal speaker in Cicero's *De senectute*, which is quoted and discussed in 'The Godly Feast' 192:28–194:20. His great-grandson, Cato the Younger 'of Utica' (95–46 BC), political opponent of Julius Caesar, killed himself when Caesar's forces won the civil war. His integrity and courage brought Cato of Utica imperishable fame. Marcus Brutus (c 78–42 BC) took his life when defeated by Antony and Octavian in the battle of Philippi in 42 BC.
- As stock examples for writers and orators, these venerated names were nearly as common in Erasmus' era as in Roman times. In a long catalogue of comparative adjectives in *De copia*, we meet such phrases as 'more saintly than Socrates,' 'more incorruptible than Aristides,' 'more intransigent than Cato (the Elder),' 'more just than Phocion' (CWE 24 391:3–5, 392:1).
- 17 In one of Erasmus' longer adages, 'The labours of Hercules' (III i 1), he alludes to the struggle with the Lernaean hydra as the greatest and most difficult (LB II 707E–708F / CWE 34 168–9), quoting Horace *Epistles* 2.1.10–11, who takes the hydra to be envy, the most dangerous monster of all. 'Who can avoid ill-will that follows like a shadow,' Erasmus asks, 'unless he equally avoids the light that is cast by excellence? The two things have a close mutual connection, and that which is the best of all things has the worst of all things as its inseparable companion.'
 - 18 The proverb quoted in *Adagia* II x 50 is more concise: λάθε βιώσας 'Live secretly,' though Erasmus' Latin translation of Plutarch's essay on this aphorism (*Moralia*

1128A–1130E *An recte dictum sit latenter esse vivendum*) has ‘So live that no one may know you have lived’ (LB IV 51A / ASD IV-2 241). Plutarch finds fault with it, first because it is insincere, for if one wishes to be entirely unknown, why does he proclaim the fact? He fails to follow his own advice. Secondly, the advice is bad because if one is virtuous his virtues may do good to others by being known. Moreover to know and to wish to be known is natural to man. On this aphorism and variations of it see M. van Rhijn in *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* new series 38 (1952) 164–78.

- 19 See ‘The Old Men’s Chat’ n25.
- 20 Terence *Andria* 65–6. Cf ‘The Poetic Feast’ 395:3–27.
- 21 Leading character in *Andria*
- 22 *Ne quid nimis*, from Terence *Andria* 61; often quoted by Erasmus. See *Adagia* I vi 96.
- 23 The ‘golden mean’ of Horace *Odes* 2.10.5. For ‘a middle state is sage,’ as Glycion says in ‘The Old Men’s Chat’ when relating the secrets of his happy and successful life. The entire passage there (451:25–452:16) is an elaboration of the counsel summarized here. See *Adagia* I vi 95.
- 24 Terence *Adelphi* 864
- 25 Horatian (*Odes* 3.3.1–8). ‘Dispassionate’ here is Greek ἀπαθής. With the purport of the line compare ‘A Fish Diet’ 697:30–2.
- 26 *Idylls* 4.43, which Erasmus quotes in *Adagia* I viii 65; and see *Adagia* II vii 55. He remembers too Lucian *Icaromenippus* 25–6, which he had translated (1512; published 1514).
- 27 Proverbial in English; not classical in this form, but ‘out of the smoke and into the fire’ (rather like our ‘out of the frying pan into the fire’) was a Greek and Latin phrase; see *Adagia* I v 5.
- 28 Sacrifices without smoke; *Adagia* I x 11
- 29 Codrus, an early king of Athens, sacrificed himself to save his country from invasion by the Spartans; see *De ratione studii* CWE 24 676:25. Menoeceus, a legendary Theban hero, fulfilled a prophecy by killing himself to save Thebes; see Euripides *Phoenissae* 905–1018. Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, is the heroine of Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Taurus* and *Iphigenia in Aulide*. The second was translated into Latin verse by Erasmus and printed with his version of Euripides’ *Hecuba* in 1506 (Paris: Josse Bade). Marcus Curtius on horseback leaped into a chasm in the Roman forum when soothsayers announced that Rome’s chief strength (arms and valour) must be sacrificed before the chasm would close (Livy 7.6.5); see *De copia* CWE 24 613:18. The Decii, father (fourth century BC), son, and by some accounts a grandson, sacrificed themselves to save the Roman republic (Cicero *De officiis* 1.18.61; *De divinitate* 1.24.51); see Erasmus’ *De copia* CWE 24 613:18, 631:13–14. Marcus Curtius, the Decii, Codrus, and Menoeceus are all named as examples of courage in *De taedio Iesu* LB V 1273A–B.
- 30 Ovid *Amores* 1.15.39, quoted in *Adagia* II vii 11, which comments on the convention of withholding deserved praise from the living and overpraising the dead
- 31 Cf *Ecclesiastes* LB V 939D–F.
- 32 Virgil *Aeneid* 5:344
- 33 Cf Pope’s ‘grace beyond the reach of art’ (*Essay on Criticism* 1.155).

- 34 Or attendant spirit, whether friendly or malevolent. See *Adagia* I i 72 and 'Rash Vows' n22. Cf *Adagia* II iv 74.
- 35 *Adagia* I i 42, and cf I i 37–8. Without the aid of Minerva (Athena to the Greeks) and one's genius, wisdom and the arts cannot flourish.
- 36 In the *Colloquies* as in other writings touching education, Erasmus discusses the variety and choice of careers. See 'Youth' 98:20–99:7 and n76.
- 37 In the case of Erasmus himself, his hatred of lies and liars ('Sympathy' 1045:33–1046:7); and by contrast his innate attraction to literature 'by a kind of secret natural force' (Allen I 2:30 / CWE Ep 1341A 42–3, Allen Ep 1110:1–11 / CWE Ep 1110:3–14 / CWE 23 16:1–13)
- 38 *Iliad* 3:179
- 39 Erasmus' memories of his own unhappy experiences as a religious (perhaps exaggerated; see Ep 447, the letter to 'Grunnius'), and the observations of his mature years, are evident in his numerous warnings against committing oneself or one's children to a religious life without due thought. One should be twenty-eight years old before making an irrevocable decision. See 'Youth' n76.
- 40 See n35 above.
- 41 Xenocrates was a follower of Plato and later (339–314 BC) head of the Academy where Plato had taught. *Adagia* III v 33 tells of his 'wondrous frugality.' He was respected but austere; Plato told him to 'sacrifice to the Graces.' Anecdotes about Xenocrates are preserved in Diogenes Laertius 4.2.6–16. The point of Symbulus' remark in the colloquy is that in temperament and manner of discourse Xenocrates differed from Socrates and the Cynic Diogenes. Similarly, the severity and obstinacy of Cato were a contrast with the wit and charm of Gaius Laelius, statesman, orator, soldier, and intimate friend of Scipio Africanus Minor. Laelius is an interlocutor in Cicero's *De amicitia* and *De senectute*.
- 42 Events in *Adelphi* change him from a harsh, unkind person to a genial one. See *De copia* CWE 24 584:10–13.
- 43 So 966:14–19 above
- 44 Which changes colour according to environment and circumstances. See *Adagia* I i 93, II iii 91. When human beings behave like cuttlefish, their purposes may be either good, or bad, or simply prudential. Thus Erasmus advises his servant-pupil Nicolaas Kan, who is about to go to England, 'You'll get along easily if you imitate a cuttlefish. Uncover your head, shake hands, give place, smile, but without trying to confide in anyone you don't know. Above all, don't criticize or scoff at anything in the neighbourhood' (Allen Ep 1832:55–9).
- 45 The Greek term Erasmus uses for the newly rich is found in two of his favourite authors, Lucian (*Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* 20) and Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 2.9 1387a19).
- 46 *terrae filiorum* and *e coelo delapsorum*. On *parvenus* of this sort see *Adagia* I viii 86. Erasmus describes one in 'The Knight without a Horse.'
- 47 *Odes* 1.12.45–6
- 48 See *Adagia* III v 60, which quotes Plato *Politicus* 264A–B, *Republic* 3.394E, and other texts on the futility of undertaking the study of philosophy, or engaging in other important enterprises, too quickly and without thorough, patient preparation. *Adagia* II i 1: *Festina lente* is a more familiar Erasmian treatment of this theme.

- 49 The quotations are from Virgil *Aeneid* 6.129–31.
- 50 To Erasmus this sort of knowledge was always attractive and useful; it was a clue to understanding human behaviour and therefore an effective aid in discourse. On large political or cultural questions he was, by preference and principle, a cosmopolitan, unusual by his avoidance of national or provincial arrogance, whether in matters of scholarship or politics. He never forgot he was Dutch, yet he was at home wherever he lived. He could think of England as a second home. He speaks sometimes of 'our France' and 'my Germany'; on one occasion he says he is uncertain whether he is French or German (Allen Ep 928:40–42 / CWE Ep 928:47–9); but what difference does it make? As an observant traveller, at various times resident in England, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, and Switzerland, and with friends in many parts of Europe, he noticed or heard of many varieties of manners and customs, places, sights, and sounds. He seems never to have forgotten them, since he often alludes in his writings – no matter what the subject – to regional or national or individual characteristics. In the *Colloquies*, 'Inns,' 'A Fish Diet,' 'Charon,' 'The Profane Feast,' and (as he would say) in 'six hundred' other places in his texts, illustrations come to mind. He likes to generalize about the French, English, Italians, and Germans among whom he lived. For to observe and report what one has learned of other peoples enforces practical wisdom. On comparison of Erasmus' cosmopolitan and patriotic sides, see Johan Huizinga 'Erasmus über Vaterland und Nationen' in *Gedenkschrift* 34–49; Craig R. Thompson 'Erasmus as Internationalist and Cosmopolitan' ARG 46 (1955) 167–96; on his 'Dutchness' Cornelis Reedijk 'What is Typically Dutch in Erasmus?' *Delta* (Amsterdam) 12 (1969) 73–80. J.-C. Margolin has assembled and analysed much of the evidence on these topics in 'Erasme et la psychologie des peuples' *Ethnopsychologie* 25 (1970) 373–424.
- 51 See especially 'Sympathy.'
- 52 *Adagia* IV iii 24. Spaniards boast of their military exploits. Italians claim primacy in literature and believe that they alone are not barbarians. Romans compare themselves to the ancient Romans. Venetians and Scots are vain of their nobility. The English think they are the handsomest and their food the best. Germans take pride in their stature and their knowledge of magic and, like the English, Danes, and Poles, are fond of eating. The French congratulate themselves on their elegant manners; Parisians think they are the best theologians (*Moriae encomium* LB IV 448B–E / ASD IV-3 128:59–129:75 / CWE 27 117). For other notices of national characteristics or customs see *Ecclesiastes* LB V 845A; *De civilitate* LB I 1034A and 1035E (on Spaniards), 1035C (on Germans), 1036D and 1041F (on Italians), 1036D–E (on English), 1036E (on French) / CWE 25 274, 276, 278, 287. In the *Colloquies* see for example 'Inns' nn8, 19, 28, 32; 'The Profane Feast' 139:39 and n46; 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 479:18–480:2; 'A Fish Diet' n247; 'Penny-Pinching' 988:28–34, 990:27–8.
- 53 See n44 above.
- 54 In a much-quoted passage in a letter of 1499, Erasmus praises the beauty of Englishwomen and tells with amused appreciation of their freedom in kissing visitors and guests. Wherever one turns, there's kissing (Allen Ep 103:15–24 / CWE Ep 103:17–29). That this report was sent to Fausto Andrelini helps to explain its jollity, for Erasmus was not likely to understate the matter to him.

(See their correspondence in Allen and *CWE*, and on Fausto consult *CEBR*). Other travellers also refer to the English custom of kissing. Leo of Rozmítal, the young Bohemian nobleman who visited England in 1466, found the women there not only free with kissing but excessively so. Like Erasmus later, he noticed that with the English, 'to offer to kiss is the same as to hold out the right hand, for they do not shake hands.' In France he was surprised that the queen embraced him and kissed him on the mouth, but the king told her to do so (*Travels* 54, 69). Another German traveller's impressions of the English custom (1484) were similar to Leo of Rozmítal's (W.D. Robson-Scott *German Travellers in England 1400-1800* [Oxford 1953] 14-15). Still another example, involving Henry VIII's sister Mary and Cardinal Wolsey, is furnished by George Cavendish *The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey* (EETS 243 [London 1959] 56:24-6 and the note, 216-17). Enea Silvio Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II) who visited Scotland in 1435, says the women there thought less of a kiss than Italian ones did of a shake of the hand (*Memoirs of a Renaissance Pope: The Commentaries of Pius II* trans Florence A. Gragg, ed Leona C. Gabel [New York 1959; repr 1962] 33). Erasmus' report differs little from what a Milanese ambassador wrote a few years later about the Swiss (J.M. Vincent *Switzerland at the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century* Johns Hopkins University Studies in History and Political Science 22 no 5 [Baltimore 1904] 18). In 'A Marriage in Name Only' 854:3-6, Erasmus writes less amiably, though for sound reasons, on kissing.

55 On the common drinking cup, see 'A Marriage in Name Only' n58.

56 *Works and Days* 285-90

57 Aristotle, who taught that men are made virtuous by habituation. They must practise what is good; 'moral virtue is the result of habit.' See *Nicomachean Ethics* 2.1 1103a14-1103b2, 10.9 1179b20-1180a9.

58 Such is the conduct of Glycion in 'The Old Men's Chat,' who has held public office. See n23 above.

59 Eusebius in 'The Godly Feast,' commenting on Proverbs 21:1-3, has a different opinion: 'Whenever princes have their minds set on anything they should be left to their whims.' See 184:4-185:25 and notes to those pages.

60 'The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison' (James 3:8); see *Adagia* II ii 39, where Erasmus refers to the passage and to 'Death and life are in the power of the tongue' (Proverbs 18:21). The power of words for good, and just as often for evil, is a recurrent topic in Erasmus, who lamented that much of his time was consumed by having to deal with detraction and controversy. See his *Lingua* (1525) on the use and abuse of the tongue (LB IV 657-754 / ASD IV-1A / *CWE* 29 249-412). Despite some unevenness of structure *Lingua* is a readable and illuminating essay. For pertinent criticism see Marcel Bataillon 'La situation présente du message érasmien' in *Colloquium Erasmianum* (Mons 1968) 3-16; M.M. Phillips 'Erasmus on the Tongue' *ERSY* 1 (1981) 113-25; Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* II 118-55; Laurel Carrington 'Erasmus' *Lingua: The Double-Edged Tongue*' *ERSY* 9 (1989) 109-18; and R.J. Schoeck *Erasmus of Europe: The Prince of Humanists 1501-1536* (Edinburgh 1993) 310-19.

61 Perhaps proverbial of something that failed or is no longer suitable in changed circumstances, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, when the musician, after hearing of Juliet's death, says 'Faith, we may put up our pipes and be gone' (4.5.96-7). Not in *Adagia*, but see Lucian *Harmonides* 2, where a piper who longs to become

famous is told to play his pipe in the theatre but not to pay attention to the crowd. Erasmus was familiar with this dialogue (see *De copia* CWE 24 574–5).

62 See n17 above.

63 'Probably a mixture of quicklime, naphtha, and pitch from petroleum and sulphur,' used as an incendiary explosive in war as early as the seventh century (A.B. Crombie *Medieval and Early Modern Science* 2 vols, rev ed [Garden City, NY 1959] I 218). 'The secret additive that caused ignition on contact with water was certainly calcium phosphide, probably manufactured by heating a mixture of lime and bones with urine' (Colin McEvedy *Penguin Atlas of Medieval History* [Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1961] 90n). Consult John R. Partington's treatise *A History of Greek Fire and Gunpowder* (Cambridge 1960) on the long history of uncertainties about the exact composition and manufacture of this explosive. What is not uncertain is that it was a terrifying weapon when first used. How much Erasmus had read or heard about Greek fire we do not know. His statement here seems to be his only allusion to it. For later readers Gibbon's account provided references to Byzantine sources (*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* chapter 52).

64 Possibly a recollection of Rom 12:20 'Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.'

65 Christ as sun or light: Mal 4:2 as interpreted by early Christians, Luke 1:78–9, John 8:12, Rev 21:23; as fire: 2 Thess 1:8, Heb 1:7, and cf 'The Sermon' n2 on the seraph that conferred the stigmata on St Francis; as a stone or jewel (*lapis*): Matt 13:46 and 21:42, 1 Cor 10:4, Eph 2:20, 1 Pet 2:6

PENNY-PINCHING

Opulentia sordida

First printed in the September 1531 edition.

As a diverting sketch of daily life in a notable Venetian household, when Erasmus the Dutchman came to dinner and stayed for eight months, this dialogue seems fairly uncomplicated. Like some other colloquies, however, it is a by-product of the literary history of his early work on the *Adagia* and of a much later reaction to the hostility of certain critics, some of them Italians. As a reader familiar with Erasmus' personal history will recognize, this colloquy has echoes of a notoriously acrimonious and prolonged quarrel over his *Ciceronianus* (March 1528, with *De recta pronuntiatione*; the first issue of the second edition of *Ciceronianus* was appended to the March 1529 edition of the *Colloquies*).

The first edition of the *Adagia*, a small volume called *Adagiorum collectanea*, containing 818 classical proverbs with brief explanations or comments, appeared in the summer of 1500 (Paris: Johannes Philippi); the second edition, slightly enlarged, in 1506 (Paris: Josse Bade). Erasmus expanded it more than once. The final edition (1536) contained 4,151 adages, with many of the comments enriched until some had become fully developed essays. In its enlarged form this was an enormously useful and popular book: a repository of classical learning, a ready resource book for writers and speakers, instructive and entertaining. The best introduction to it is Margaret Mann Phillips' *The 'Adages' of Erasmus: A Study with Translations* (Cambridge 1964). A complete English translation is being published in *CWE* 30-6.

In the late summer of 1506, Erasmus departed for Italy, where he remained until midsummer 1509. He was in Bologna, Florence, then in Bologna again in November 1506. A year later (October 1507) he was once again in Bologna. From there he wrote to Aldo Manuzio, the famed printer and founder of the 'New Academy' in Venice, to sound him out on reprinting his translations of two tragedies by Euripides, *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulide* (previously printed in 1506 in Paris by Josse Bade). Aldo Manuzio agreed and issued them promptly in December 1507. This connection with Manuzio led to Erasmus' going to Venice in order to continue or resume work on a new and enlarged edition of the *Adagia*. This edition, henceforth called *Adagiorum chiliades*, contained 3,260 proverbs. Erasmus says he stayed in Venice 'eight or nine months more or less' (*Adagia* II i 1 LB II 405C); 'nearly eight months' (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1137B). Since he seems to have remained for several months (until December) after finishing

work on the *Adagia* (Allen I 13:4 / CWE Ep 1341A:440–1, Allen I 61:156), his arrival in Venice may be dated c March or April 1508. When he came there, he was invited by Aldo Manuzio to join the household Aldo's family shared with his father-in-law, Andrea Torresani, the senior partner in the printing firm. Although Erasmus and Aldo became close friends, Erasmus was in a formal sense the guest of Torresani, who owned the house. 'Penny-Pinching' is mainly about Torresani; Aldo is a secondary figure.

Torresani had detractors in Venice, some of whom probably envied his prosperity, others who resented his selfishness (as they saw it) and his niggardliness. To what degree he deserved his reputation is an interesting question, though for readers of this colloquy a minor one. It is true that Erasmus' account of him seems a rude return for hospitality. Still, Torresani could not have been harmed by it, since the dialogue was not printed until several years after his death (1528). Erasmus' description of him as head of the household is unflattering, to say the least, and was intended to be so, but Erasmus might have retorted, 'Well, that's what the old miser was like.' The art of satire requires that its object be true to life and deserving of the treatment he receives. The satirist must please the reader while censuring the vices or eccentricities of his targeted victim.

Several years before 'Penny-Pinching' was published, Erasmus had caused a stir with another dialogue, *Ciceronianus*. In this he examined the claims and excesses of authors, past and present and of various nationalities, who carried adulation and imitation of Ciceronian style to an extreme. He himself upheld a doctrine of imitation chosen in accordance with one's informed standards of taste and – as he took pains to emphasize – one's own *genius* or *ingenium*, not a slavish attempt to imitate another writer. His candid yet tempered judgments of various authors from these standpoints were resented by some, as he may have expected. He went further by denouncing the paganism, open or latent, of certain modern writers and speaks darkly of a group in Rome who 'have more literature than religion' (LB I 1017B / ASD I-2 694:22 / CWE 28 432).

An unanticipated protest against Erasmus' treatment of Cicero and Ciceronians may have supplied the immediate occasion for 'Penny-Pinching.' In March 1529, Julius Caesar Scaliger, a hitherto obscure Italian admirer of Cicero, fired with a desire for fame and with indignation at *Ciceronianus*, wrote an *Oratio pro M. Tullio Cicerone contra Des. Erasmus Roterodamum* (published in September 1531), in which he charged among other things that Erasmus had been given to drunkenness in his Venetian days. Scaliger later wrote a second 'oration' against Erasmus, but that came out in 1537, after Erasmus' death, and does not concern us here. (On Scaliger see a life by Vernon Hall in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* new series 40 no 2

[1950] 86–170, especially 94–114, where the two orations are summarized; see also the bibliography in CEBR.) Before he had even read the *Oratio* of 1531, Erasmus insisted that it was not the work of Scaliger but of Girolamo Aleandro, who had been papal legate to Germany but was well known to Erasmus as a promising young scholar in Venice, where they were good friends and lived together (Allen Epp 2565:24–7, 2575:6–7, 2577, 2579:35–8, 2581:1–13, 2587:9–12, 2736:1–7). The oftener he repeated this conviction about Aleandro's authorship, the more strongly Erasmus believed it. Aleandro swore that he had never heard of Scaliger's attack until Erasmus accused him of writing it (Allen Ep 2638:15–23 and Ep 2639). Erasmus did not willingly change his mind. However much Aleandro protested, and whether or not the published *Oratio* purported to come from the pen of Scaliger, Erasmus believed Aleandro was at the bottom of this intolerable slander. 'I recognize Aleandro's language there as well as I know his face' (Allen Ep 2565:24–6). So he wrote in November 1531. A year later he concedes that he has not read the *Oratio* thoroughly, but 'I know the author as surely as I know I'm alive' (Allen Ep 2736:5). On Aleandro see further n25 below.

'Penny-Pinching,' then, is both a Lucianic entertainment about Andrea Torresani, Mr Moneybags, and, indirectly, the expression of a mood of irritation at some of Erasmus' recent critics. Alberto Pio had accused him of going to Venice to improve his Greek and Latin with Aldo's help. Erasmus replies scornfully, 'I knew Greek and Latin better when I went to Italy than I do now' (*Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1137A–C; on this work see the introduction to 'The Seraphic Funeral' 996–7). As for drunkenness, he shows in 'Penny-Pinching' how far from debauchery life in the Torresani household was; the food and drink were so bad that he has felt the effects ever since, for he blames his recurrent attacks of kidney stone on those months in Venice (see n13 below). The notion that he worked for the press he rebuts by pointing out that he did not work for Aldo Manuzio but for himself, spending all his time on the *Adagia* and passing the sheets, as he finished them, to compositors to set in type.

The earliest printed translation of this colloquy into Italian appears to be the version by Pietro Lauro (Venice 1545, 1549). A modern one is included in Manlio Dazzi's monograph *Aldo Manuzio e il dialogo veneziano di Erasmo* (Vicenza 1969). On Venetian humanism see Deno J. Geanakoplos *Greek Scholars in Venice* (Cambridge, Mass 1962) and Margaret L. King *Venetian Humanism in an Age of Patrician Dominance* (Princeton 1986). On the Aldine press the most important of older works is A. Renouard, *Annales de l'imprimerie des Alde* 3 vols (Paris 1825; 3rd ed 1934; repr 1953); of modern ones, and indispensable, is Martin Lowry *The World of Aldus Manutius* (Oxford and Ithaca 1979); on other aspects of printing in Venice consult Paul Grendler

The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press (Princeton 1977); on Erasmus in Italy, A. Renaudet *Erasme et l'Italie* (Geneva 1954), which supersedes P. de Nolhac's briefer *Erasme et l'Italie* (Paris 1898). John F. D'Amico *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome* (Baltimore 1983) has relevant material on Erasmus. On Erasmus' reputation in Italy see Myron P. Gilmore's articles; three of these are mentioned in the introduction to 'The Seraphic Funeral' 999 below; a fourth is 'Anti-Erasmianism in Italy: The Dialogue of Ortensio Lando on Erasmus' Funeral' *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1974) 2–14. For other studies of the survival of Erasmus' books and ideas in Italy by Silvana Seidel Menchi see Margolin 'Travaux érasmiens (1970–1985)' 616–17. A census of Erasmus holdings in Vatican, Roman, and other Italian libraries is provided by Marcella and Paul Grendler 'The Survival of Erasmus in Italy' *Erasmus in English* 8 (1976) 2–22 and 'The Erasmus Holdings of Roman and Vatican Libraries' *Erasmus in English* 13 (1984) 2–29.

The frequent allusions to Italian people and places and to his experiences in Italy testify to the significance of that chapter of Erasmus' biography. Many other studies besides those listed here are recorded in Margolin's bibliographies and Lowry's book.

JAMES, GILBERT¹

- James** Where have you been? You're so dried up you might have been feeding on dew² with the cicadas. So far as I can see, you're a mere shell³ of a man.
- Gilbert** Shades in hell are filled with mallow and leek,⁴ but I've lived for ten months where not even that comes your way.
- James** Where, if you please? Not carried off to a galley, were you?
- Gilbert** Oh, no – at Synodium.⁵
- James** You were in danger of starvation in so prosperous a city?⁶
- Gilbert** Most certainly I was.
- James** How come? Were you broke?
- Gilbert** No lack of money or friends.
- James** What was the trouble, then?
- Gilbert** The trouble had to do with my host, Antronius.⁷
- James** Mr Moneybags?
- Gilbert** Yes, but a real skinflint.
- James** That sounds odd.
- Gilbert** Not at all. That's the way it is with people who go from rags to riches.
- James** Then why were you willing to stay so many months with such a host?

Gilbert I had a reason, so at the time I simply decided to stay.

James But do tell me exactly what his style of living was like.

Gilbert I'll tell you, since remembrance of trials past is generally pleasant.⁸

James It will be so to me, surely.

- 5 **Gilbert** The weather⁹ added to the discomfort. While I was there the north wind blew for three whole months, except that for some reason or other it never persisted more than eight days at a time.

James Then how did it blow for three whole months?

- Gilbert** About the eighth day it swerved from its course, so to speak, but
10 after eight hours moved back to its earlier place.

James A person of slight physique would need a glowing fire there.

- Gilbert** With enough wood we'd have had enough fire, but our friend Antronius refused to go to this expense. From little farms out on the islands he dug up – usually at night – roots of trees overlooked by others. With
15 these, damp as they were, a fire was made. It had plenty of smoke but no flame;¹⁰ it gave off no heat but did enable him to deny the charge that there was no fire at all. So slowly did it burn that this one fire lasted all day.

James A hard place to winter in!

Gilbert But much harder to summer in.

- 20 **James** How so?

Gilbert Because the house was so full of fleas and bedbugs you had neither peace by day nor sleep by night.

James What miserly riches!

Gilbert Especially in that sort of herd.

- 25 **James** The women there must be lazy.

Gilbert They keep to themselves; they don't move among the men. As a result, the women there are – just women; men don't get the services usually provided by that sex.

James But didn't this treatment annoy Antronius?

- 30 **Gilbert** Since he was brought up in such niggardliness, the only thing he cared about was money. He'd live anywhere rather than at home, and he had a finger in every pie. You know that city, above all others, is a centre of trade.¹¹ There was once a famous painter who thought the day wasted if he had not painted a stroke.¹² Antronius mourned far more if a day went by
35 without a profit. When this did happen, he'd go try his luck at home.

James What would he do?

Gilbert He had a cistern in the house, as is customary in that city. From this he drew some buckets of water that he poured into wine jugs. This was sure gain.

James Maybe the wine was too strong.

- 40 **Gilbert** No, on the contrary it was worse than flat, since he bought only spoiled wine, which he could get at a lower price. To avoid wasting any, he'd

often mix ten years' dregs with it (he hadn't allowed any of the dregs to be wasted!), stirring all together to make it seem like new wine.

James But if the medical men are to be believed, such wine causes kidney stones.

5 **Gilbert** The medics aren't mistaken, for that household didn't get through a year without one or two deaths from the stone.¹³ *He* wasn't afraid of a house of mourning.

James No?

Gilbert He made money even from the dead;¹⁴ didn't scorn even the
10 slightest advantage.

James Theft, you mean.

Gilbert Business men call it profit.

James But what would Antronius himself drink?

Gilbert Usually the same nectar.

15 **James** Without ill effect?

Gilbert He was so tough he could eat hay;¹⁵ and, as I've said, he was brought up on such delicacies from tender youth. – He thought nothing was more certain than this gain.

James Why so?

20 **Gilbert** If you count wife, sons, daughter, son-in-law,¹⁶ workmen, and servants, he supported nearly thirty people in the household.¹⁷ Now the more the wine was diluted, the more sparingly they drank and the more slowly it was drained. Just figure what a bucket of water added each day amounts to in a year – no mean sum.

25 **James** The stinginess of it!

Gilbert But he made no less saving on bread.

James How?

Gilbert He bought spoiled wheat nobody else would take. Here was an immediate gain, because he bought for less. But he was expert enough to
30 remedy what was spoiled.

James How, exactly?

Gilbert There's a kind of white clay,¹⁸ something like grain, that horses are evidently fond of; they gnaw at walls having this clay and drink more readily from ponds muddied by it. The bread he made was one-third clay.

35 **James** Is this what you mean by 'remedying'?

Gilbert Anyway the badness of the wheat was less noticeable. And do you imagine this profit was to be sneezed at? Here's another clever dodge: he kneaded the bread at home, not oftener than twice a month, even in summer.

James That's serving stones, not bread.¹⁹

40 **Gilbert** Or something harder than stones, if it's possible. But for this difficulty too he had a ready remedy.

James What?

Gilbert He soaked hunks of bread in cups of wine.

James That was in character.²⁰ But did the workers stand for such treatment?

Gilbert I'll describe first the fare prescribed for the heads of the family, to
5 let you guess more easily how the workers might be treated.

James I want to hear about it.

Gilbert Breakfast wasn't mentioned there. Lunch was usually put off until one o'clock.²¹

James Why?

10 **Gilbert** They were waiting for the master, Antronius. Dinner was sometimes served towards ten in the evening.

James Yet you used to fret when hungry.

Gilbert For that reason I'd often protest to Orthrogonus,²² Antronius' son-in-law, since we used to meet in the same dining room. 'See here,
15 Orthrogonus, don't Synodians eat today?' 'Antronius will soon be here,' was the cheerful reply. When I saw no signs of food and my stomach was barking, I said, 'Look, Orthrogonus, must I starve today?' He apologized for the hour, or something of the sort. When I could no longer stand the barking in my stomach, I interrupted him once more. 'What's it to be?' I said.
20 'Must I die of hunger?' When Orthrogonus had evaded the issue as long as he could, he went to the servants and told them to set the table. At last, when Antronius did not return and nothing was prepared, Orthrogonus, overcome by my loud reproaches, went down to his wife, mother-in-law, and children, bawling to them to get dinner ready.

25 **James** Now, at least, I expect dinner.

Gilbert Don't be in a hurry. Finally a lame servant assigned to this job – a fellow reminding you of Vulcan – came in and laid the tablecloth. This was the first prospect of dinner. At last, after much clamour, glass bowls of clear water are brought in.

30 **James** Another sign of dinner.

Gilbert Don't be in a hurry, I say. Again a frightful din, then a jar filled with that foul nectar²³ is fetched.

James Bravo!

Gilbert But without bread. Not that there was the slightest risk; nobody,
35 even if starving, would willingly drink such wine. More shouting until they're hoarse;²⁴ then, at long last, the bread – which a bear could hardly break with his teeth – is served.

James Surely they've now decided to save your life.

Gilbert Towards midnight Antronius finally arrived, generally with a most
40 ominous prologue; he'd complain of a stomach-ache.

James Why was this a bad omen?

Gilbert Because then there was nothing to eat – for what would you expect of a host who felt ill?

James Was he really sick?

Gilbert So sick he'd have devoured three capons by himself if someone had
5 made him a present of them.

James I'm waiting for the feast.

Gilbert First he was served a dish of bean meal, the sort of sops commonly sold there to the poor. He said he used this as a cure for every kind of ailment.

10 **James** How many of you guests were there?

Gilbert At times eight or nine, among whom was the learned Verpius²⁵ (not unknown to you, I believe) and the elder son of the household.

James What were they served?

Gilbert Isn't the fare Melchisedek offered to Abraham,²⁶ victor over five
15 kings, good enough for ordinary mortals?

James Nothing by way of sops, then?

Gilbert Something.

James What?

Gilbert We numbered nine guests at table,²⁷ I remember, though in the dish I
20 counted only seven tiny lettuce leaves swimming in vinegar, but without oil.

James So he ate his beans by himself?

Gilbert He had bought scarcely halfpennyworth, yet he didn't object if someone sitting by him wanted to taste them. But it seemed impolite to take the poor fellow's food away from him.

25 **James** Were the lettuce leaves chopped up, as the adage says of cumin?²⁸

Gilbert No, but after the lettuce was eaten by the first comers, the other diners dipped their bread in vinegar.

James What followed the seven lettuce leaves?

Gilbert Why, a cheese, of course: the finale of feasts.

30 **James** Was this always the fare?

Gilbert Nearly always, except that once in a while, if he'd been lucky in business that day, it was a little more elaborate.

James What had you then?

Gilbert He'd order three bunches of fresh grapes for a copper, an event that
35 would overwhelm the entire family with joy.

James Why not?

Gilbert This was done only when grapes were cheapest there.

James Then except in autumn he squandered nothing?

Gilbert Yes, he 'squandered.' The boatmen there dig up a tiny sort of
40 shellfish (especially from latrines) and hawk their wares. From time to time

he bought a farthing's worth (what they call a *bagattino*) from them. Then truly you'd have said there was a wedding feast in that household, since a fire was needed (although the shellfish are very quickly cooked). These were served after the cheese as dessert.²⁹

5 **James** A distinguished dessert, by Hercules! But you never got meat or fish?

Gilbert In the end, when overcome by my complaints, he began to be extravagant. Whenever he wished to pose as a Lucullus³⁰ the courses were usually these –

James I can hardly wait to hear this, you may be sure.

10 **Gilbert** – first a soup was served, called – I don't know why – *minèstra*.³¹

James Rich, I dare say.

Gilbert Seasoned with spices, as follows. A pot of water, with some pieces of buffalo cheese³² tossed in, was put on the fire – the cheese so aged it was hard as a rock; you'd need a good sharp ax to break it. When these pieces

15 start to melt in the hot water they discolour it; no longer can it be called mere water. This broth is their appetizer.

James Fit for hogs.

Gilbert Next on the menu is a piece of old tripe, boiled a fortnight earlier.

James Rotten, then.

20 **Gilbert** Of course, but there's a remedy for that.

James What?

Gilbert I'll tell you, but I'm afraid you'll copy it.

James Certainly I will.

Gilbert They beat an egg in warm water and soak the meat in this broth,
25 so your eyes are fooled more than your nose, for the stench gets through everything. If it's a fish day, they sometimes serve three gilthead – not big ones, though, despite seven or eight diners.

James Nothing else?

Gilbert Nothing except that rocklike cheese.

30 **James** You tell me of a new kind of Lucullus. But could such slender fare be enough for so many diners, especially when they had tasted no breakfast?

Gilbert What's more – I don't want you to miss this point – mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, younger son, maidservant, and several youngsters were fed on the leftovers from this feast.

35 **James** Well, you've aroused my wonder but not dispelled it.

Gilbert I can scarcely describe the scene to you unless I first sketch the arrangement of the feast.

James Sketch it, then.

Gilbert Antronius was at the head, though I sat at his right as if I were the
40 guest of honour; opposite Antronius, Orthrogonus, with Verpius beside him;

Strategus the Greek³³ beside Verpius. On Antronius' left sat his elder son;³⁴ if some dinner guest arrived, the place was yielded to him out of respect.

To begin with, there was very little danger of running out of broth and little difference in the servings, except that pieces of the buffalo cheese floated in the dishes of the principal diners. But a sort of barricade was made of the water and wine jars, usually four in number, to prevent anyone – except the three before whom the bowl was set – from touching what was served. Anyone else who touched it would have been treated as absolutely brazen and as a trespasser.³⁵ After a short stay this bowl was carried off, in order that something might be left for the family.

James What did the rest eat, then?

Gilbert They feasted sumptuously, as a rule.

James How?

Gilbert They soaked that chalky bread in the very mustiest wine.

James A feast like that must have been decidedly brief.

Gilbert Often it lasted over an hour.

James How could it?

Gilbert After removal, as I said, of what was in danger of being eaten, cheese was served. No danger of anyone's being able to slice any of it with a knife! That choice musty wine and everybody's sop of bread remained on the table, and over this dessert stories went safely round. Meanwhile the distaff side were having their meal.

James What of the workers all this while?

Gilbert They had no connection with us. They lunched and supped at their own hours but spent scarcely half an hour a day on meals.

James What sort of fare had they?

Gilbert That's for you to guess.

James But the Germans can hardly get through breakfast in an hour. They need the same amount of time for a snack, an hour and a half for lunch, two hours for dinner;³⁶ and unless they're well filled with choice wine, good meat, and fish, they quit their master and run off to war.³⁷

Gilbert Every nation has its own customs.³⁸ The Italians spend very little on food or drink;³⁹ they prefer money to pleasure⁴⁰ and are sober by nature as well as habit.

James Well, I'm no longer surprised you came back to us so thin, but I'm amazed that you came back alive at all, especially since you'd been used to capons, partridges, doves, and pheasants.

Gilbert Undoubtedly I'd have died had not a remedy been found.

James It's a bad business that needs so many remedies.

Gilbert Since I was now wasting away, I arranged to have a quarter of a boiled chicken at each meal.

James Now you'll begin to live!

Gilbert Not quite. To save money, they bought a thin little chicken; half a dozen of that kind wouldn't have made a breakfast for one Polander with a good appetite. And they wouldn't feed it after they bought it – too expensive! So they cooked a wing or leg of the half-starved bird; the liver they gave to Orthrogonus' young boy,⁴¹ but the broth, with more water constantly added to it, was drunk again and again by the women. And so a joint drier than pumice, and more tasteless than a rotten stick, came to me. The broth was nothing but water.

10 **James** Yet I hear that poultry there is very plentiful, choice, and cheap.

Gilbert True, but they love money more.⁴²

James You were punished enough even if you'd killed the pope or desecrated St Peter's tomb.⁴³

Gilbert But hear the story out. You know we eat meat five days a week.

15 **James** Of course.

Gilbert Therefore they bought only two chickens. On Thursday they'd pretend they forgot to buy them, to avoid serving a whole chicken on that day and having anything left over.

James Well, this Antronius beats Plautus' Euclio.⁴⁴ But how did you contrive to save your life on fish days?

20 **Gilbert** I had arranged for a friend to buy me three eggs every day at my cost, two for lunch and one for dinner. But – once more – the women substituted half-rotten ones for the expensive fresh ones, so that I counted myself very lucky if one out of three was edible. And finally, I'd bought with
25 my own money a skin of better wine, but the women broke into my room and drank it up within a few days – not that Antronius minded.

James So nobody there felt sorry for you?

Gilbert Sorry? Far from it. To them I seemed a glutton and a gormandizer to consume so much food by myself. Consequently Orthrogonus often
30 warned me to follow the custom of the country and to take thought for my health, and he called to mind some of our acquaintances whose gluttony had brought them to death or a terrible disease. When he saw me bolstering my feeble body with certain dainties (made of pine nuts⁴⁵ or pumpkin and melon seeds and sold by pharmacists there), a body broken by incessant
35 labour, undernourishment, and now even disease, he'd secretly prevail upon my good friend the doctor to advise me to eat more lightly.⁴⁶ And the man earnestly did so. I soon sensed that he'd been put up to it, but I said nothing. When he became more insistent on the subject and wouldn't stop admonishing me, I said, 'Tell me, my good friend,⁴⁷ do you mean this or are
40 you joking?' 'I'm serious,' he replied. 'Then what are you trying to get me to do?' 'Give up dinner entirely and make your wine at least half water.' At this

advice I laughed and said, 'If you want to kill me off, it would be fatal for this poor, lean, excessively delicate body to miss a single dinner. I've learned this so often by experience that I daren't try it again. What do you suppose will happen if, after the sort of lunch I eat, I abstain from dinner? And you
 5 bid me add water to the sort of wine I drink? As if it wouldn't be better to drink pure water than bad wine! I've no doubt Orthrogonus ordered you to tell me this.' The doctor smiled and toned down his advice. 'I don't tell you these things, most learned Gilbert, to make you cut out dinners entirely. You may eat an egg and take one drink; that's how *I* live. For dinner I have an egg
 10 boiled; then I take half the yolk and give the rest to my son. Next I drink off half a cup of wine – and I study until late at night.'

James The doctor wasn't telling the truth, was he?

Gilbert The absolute truth. Once I happened to be walking down the street on my way home from church and a companion remarked that the doctor lived
 15 nearby. I was curious to see his domain. Now this was on a Sunday. I knocked at the door; it was opened; I entered and encountered the doctor eating lunch with his son and the servant. The fare was two eggs – nothing else.

James They must have been bloodless men.

Gilbert On the contrary, they were well built, with good colour, rosy cheeks,
 20 and sparkling eyes.

James It's hardly credible.

Gilbert But I'm telling you exactly what I found. And he's not the only man who lives like that; many others, of distinguished family and fortune, do the same. Heavy eating and drinking, believe me, are matters of habit, not of
 25 nature. If one worked up to it by stages, one could, in the end, match Milo's feat of consuming a whole ox in a single day.⁴⁸

James Good Lord! If you can preserve your health on such a slim diet, how much money the Germans, English, Danes, and Poles must waste.

Gilbert A lot, unquestionably, and not without serious injury to both mental
 30 and physical health.

James But why wasn't that diet good enough for you?

Gilbert Because I was accustomed to different ones, and it was too late to change my habit. The scarcity of the food, however, did not bother me so much as the badness of it. Two eggs would have sufficed had they been
 35 fresh; one cup of wine was enough had not musty dregs been served up for wine; half a loaf of bread would have sustained me had not chalk been served instead of bread.

James Is Antronius so stingy when he's so rich?

Gilbert His fortune amounted to not less than eighty thousand ducats,⁴⁹ I
 40 believe, and there wasn't a single year in which he failed to increase it by a thousand ducats at least.

James But the young men for whom he made all this money weren't so stingy, were they?

Gilbert Yes, but only at home. Away from home they lived high, whored, gambled, and while the father grumbled at spending a farthing on the most
 5 honourable guests, the young fellows sometimes lost sixty ducats a night at dice.⁵⁰

James That's how riches scraped together by miserliness generally disappear. But after safely surviving such great dangers where are you off to now?

10 **Gilbert** To the delightful company of the French,⁵¹ to make up for lost time.

NOTES

1 James and Gilbert cannot be identified confidently, but it is reasonable to think the name Gilbert is borrowed from Gilbert Cousin (Gilbertus Cognatus), who was at this time one of Erasmus' secretaries; on him see the introduction to 'The Master's Bidding.'

2 *Adagia* IV iv 16

3 *syphar*, a Greek word Gilbert Cousin uses of Erasmus in a Greek epigram (see Preserved Smith *Erasmus: A Study of His Life, Ideals and Place in History* [New York and London 1923; repr New York 1962] 407). On this proverbial term see *Adagia* I i 26 and I iii 56.

4 Cf 'Courtship' 258:27-31 and 'Charon' 822:31-2.

5 This name, here denoting Venice, is a variant of *synodus*, a meeting-place, whether for ecclesiastics or scholars (as above in 'The Philological Society') or of traders. Here it has both meanings, for Venice was a major commercial centre and prominent in the printing and publishing of scholarly and literary works, as Erasmus often reminds us. A description of the city in the last decade of the fifteenth century, about the time Aldo Manuzio arrived there, can be found in Arnold von Harff's journal of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem; on this see 'Rash Vows' n3. Erasmus is not concerned in this dialogue with Venice as a city renowned for its art, wealth, and political importance; his interest here lies in the attractions and resources of Venice for classical scholars like himself. On these and related topics a good place to begin is D.J. Geanakoplos *Greek Scholars in Venice*; Martin Lowry's copious bibliography in his *The World of Aldus Manutius* can be consulted for other studies (on these see also the introduction 981-2 above).

6 See 983:32-3 below.

7 Also the name of the blustering abbot in 'The Abbot and the Learned Lady.' 'Antronius' is synonymous with 'ass,' but in the proverb (*Adagia* II v 68) where it is discussed, the name implies corpulence as well as asininity. Andrea Torresani di Asola (1451-1528) in the present colloquy is far from stupid and is not gross in the sense that the well-fed abbot in the earlier dialogue is. Rather, he is an 'Antronius' because of his stubbornness and stinginess or, to give it a

better name, his single-mindedness. For despite all his unamiable traits, he is shrewd and conspicuously successful (as was Andrea Torresani).

Torresani, often called Asulano or Asulanus, was printing in Venice, as early as the 1470s, Latin books on law, philosophy, and literature. Although many details of his association with Aldo Manuzio remain obscure, the two men appear to have become partners in 1495, a decade earlier than was formerly assumed (Lowry [introduction 981–2 above] 82–6, 103 n50). There was a third partner too: Pierfrancesco Barbarigo, son of a Venetian doge. He took no part in printing operations, but his capital and influence in the company were clearly essential. Torresani had more technical and commercial experience than Aldo Manuzio, but to Erasmus and the literary humanists of his age, as to ours, the Aldine press meant Aldo Manuzio, not Torresani, who had little classical or literary knowledge. None the less the two printers were closely associated – Aldo married a daughter of Torresani in 1505 – and the combination of their individual talents brought them success. By the time of Aldo Manuzio's death in 1515, Torresani had been converted, so to speak, to the significance of Aldo's interests, particularly Greek, and endeavoured to preserve them in his publishing, as he informs Erasmus (see Ep 589). After Aldo's death, Torresani brought out Pausanias, a Greek New Testament, the *editio princeps* of Aeschylus, and Galen, all of which, as editorial projects, were probably begun in Aldo's lifetime.

- 8 A classical commonplace. See *Adagia* II iii 43 and 'The Shipwreck' n2.
- 9 Greek in the original
- 10 Cf *Adagia* I x 11: *Sacrum sine fumo* 'A smokeless sacrifice,' said of a dinner that has no cooked food – a thin meal, short commons.
- 11 *Mercurialem*, dedicated to or under the patronage of Mercury, god of commerce and thievery. See *Adagia* IV vii 2, 4
- 12 Apelles, according to Pliny *Naturalis historia* 35.84; see *Adagia* I iv 12 and *Parabola* LB I 601C / CWE 23 228:11–12.
- 13 Erasmus in 1523 and 1526 dated his first attacks of kidney stone to his Venetian days. See Allen and CWE Ep 1349:2–4 and *Adagia* II i i LB II 405C.
- 14 By fair means or foul; see *Adagia* I ix 12.
- 15 *Adagia* III i 91; Allen Ep 2899:44
- 16 Orthrogonus. See n22 below.
- 17 Excluding guests, members of the family, and servants leaves about fifteen persons who were workmen in the printing shop.
- 18 Potter's earth
- 19 Self-explanatory, but possibly a memory also of Matt 4:3 or Luke 4:3
- 20 *Adagia* I x 71; see 'Military Affairs' n28.
- 21 Two or three hours later than the customary time for *prandium*. For another complaint about meals delayed see 'Inns' 371:26–7 and the description that follows. On the usual hours for meals see 'The Godly Feast' n15.
- 22 Aldo Manuzio. His name in this dialogue is 'compounded of the Greek words for "dawn" or "early morning" and "born," as if Manutius were derived from *mane* and *natus*' (Smith Key 53).
Erasmus completed the 1508 edition of the *Adagia* when writing in Aldo's printing shop. *Adagia* II i 1: *Festina lente* 'Make haste slowly' contains a long description of an ancient coin belonging to Aldo that showed a dolphin wound

about an anchor – a symbol that became familiar to readers everywhere as the trademark of the Aldine press. Erasmus explains the meanings of this symbol and why it is so appropriate to Aldo Manuzio and his work. These comments are followed by an encomium of Aldo's splendid services to classical learning. In the 1526 edition Erasmus added a long passage in praise of good printing in general and of Aldo in particular, naming Johann Froben as a worthy successor to Aldo and calling attention to Froben's equally familiar symbol or trademark, the serpent and dove.

- 23 The wine described at 983:39–984:14
- 24 *Adagia* iv i 70. A Greek idiom, Erasmus says, but the only example cited is Plautus *Aulularia* 336.
- 25 'Circumcised,' meaning Girolamo Aleandro, whom Erasmus liked to taunt by pretending to believe he was a Jew. Aleandro (1480–1542), a precocious student, once taught Hebrew in Venice, a fact that lent some colour to Erasmus' epithet. An appointment (1503) in the household of Domenico Grimani, bishop and later cardinal, gave Aleandro an early start up the ladder of preferment. Young as he was, he was praised for his learning by Aldo Manuzio, who dedicated to him the Aldine edition of Homer (1504). A few years later he assisted in the preparation of the edition of Plutarch's *Moralia*. In 1508 he shared a room with Erasmus, with whom he was then on cordial terms. Thence on to Paris, where he taught with success (1508–13) and became principal of a college. After that he was secretary to bishops and became Vatican librarian. When his patron, Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, became Pope Clement VII, Aleandro was made archbishop of Brindisi (1524). Finally, in 1536, he became a cardinal.
Like his good friend Alberto Pio, Aleandro in his later years was severely critical of Erasmus' religious writings and opinions and a vigorous enemy of Lutheranism. When papal legate to the Diet of Worms in 1521, he considered Erasmus worse than Luther. Erasmus, he declared, was the source of all the troubles (*fomes malorum*) caused by Luther (*Aleander und Luther*, 1521 . . . ed Th. Brieger [Gotha 1884] I 51–4, 82). He even accused Erasmus of having written Luther's *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae* (1520); see Allen Ep 1218:1–21 / CWE Ep 1218:1–24. But when the papal bull *Decet Romanum pontificem* – pronouncing on Luther the sentence of excommunication threatened in *Exsurge Domine* (June 1520) – was signed in Rome in January 1521, Aleandro deliberately withheld publication of it for six months or longer. It seemed to him so drastic, so explosive, that he sent it back to Rome to be toned down. See Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* 5, 22–3, 78–9.
- 26 Bread and wine; see Gen 14:18–20.
- 27 On this number see 'The Profane Feast' n102.
- 28 'A slicer of cumin' was a niggardly fellow, a miser; *Adagia* II i 5.
- 29 *bellaria*. Also at 988:21 below; Gellius 13.11.6–7.
- 30 Roman general and statesman noted for wealth and luxury; see 'The Profane Feast' n18.
- 31 Any of many kinds of soup, but at this meal decidedly meagre fare
- 32 Mozzarella cheese, made from the milk of water buffalo
- 33 Probably Caesar Strategus, who was a copier of manuscripts in Florence and Venice. See CEBR.

- 34 Gianfrancesco Torresani (c 1480–1558), who succeeded his father as head of the printing house in 1528. He quarrelled with Aldo's son and successor, Paolo, for a time, but afterwards they collaborated until 1539, when the firm was dissolved. See CEBR.
- 35 *Adagia* I x 93
- 36 On German meals see 'Inns' 371:26–375:4, and cf 'Charon' 824:17–22.
- 37 If German labourers did so, even though they had plenty to eat, it is not surprising that workers in the Aldine shop sometimes deserted. Aldo was not an easy master. See Lowry 55–6.
- 38 *Adagia* IV iii 25: *Mores hominum regioni respondent*
- 39 So *Ecclesiastes* LB V 916C. This is a contrast with the swilling Germans ('Inns' n28).
- 40 The French also are parsimonious. See 'The Profane Feast' 139:39 and n46.
- 41 Aldo Manuzio had three sons. The oldest, and the only one Erasmus could have known, was Manuzio (1506–68). He must be the person meant here. He joined his brothers in the family business for a short time and later held a benefice, but seems to have failed at whatever he undertook. The second son, Antonio (1511–59), was an agent for the firm in Bologna, but he too was unsuccessful. The true heir of Aldo Manuzio as a scholar and printer, and the only son who prospered, was his youngest son Paolo (1512–74), who printed in Venice until 1558, when he moved to Rome and carried on the business there until his death. See CEBR.
- 42 A friend who had visited Venice recently told Erasmus in February 1532 that at the Torresani establishment *opulentia sordida* still prevailed: the place reeked of money (Allen Ep 2594:12–16).
- 43 *Adagia* II viii 23. Here as in 'A Marriage in Name Only' 845:36 the translation is a euphemism for 'urinated on,' an act of shocking contempt for the person buried there and for the meaning and principles of his life – the supreme insult.
- 44 The old miser in Plautus' *Aulularia*
- 45 The edible seeds of various pine trees
- 46 Typical advice of an Italian physician, according to *Ecclesiastes* LB V 875D. German doctors, on the other hand, like to bleed you or send you to the public baths (on which see 'Inns' n20).
- 47 Ambrogio Leoni (Ambrosius Leo), a physician who turned to Greek studies. He was physician to Aldo's family when Erasmus was in Venice. Erasmus praises his learning in *Adagia* I ii 63 (LB II 95F) and II iii 50. One letter from him to Erasmus and one from Erasmus to him survive (Epp 854, 868), both of 1518.
- 48 One of the anecdotes told of Milo of Croton (*Adagia* II iii 10; cf I ii 51). He was a famous athlete (sixth century BC), who is said to have won at six or seven Olympic games and six times at the Pythian games. See *De copia* CWE 24 303:13–17, 392:1, 591:1–2, and *Adagia* II iv (misnumbered in LB II) 43, 44 and III x 85.
- 49 How Erasmus arrived at this figure it is idle to inquire. He may have heard of it as gossip or may have simply plucked it out of the air. No matter, for the rhetorical effect, which is like that of 'He's a millionaire' in our idiom, fits the impression of Torresani gained from the preceding pages. He hoarded money as skilfully as he made it.

The Venetian gold ducat was an 'international medium of exchange *par excellence*' (CWE 1 314). What its purchasing power today would be is not easily answered, but its comparative value in Erasmus' time gives some inkling of what he is saying when he speaks of eighty thousand ducats. A proofreader in fifteenth-century Venice earned four to six ducats monthly. The printer (Paganinis) of Nicholas of Lyra's commentary on the Bible (1492) claimed to have spent four thousand ducats producing the book. The brothers Giunti, printers in Florence and Venice, had joint assets of between twelve and fifteen thousand ducats in 1505. Rent for Torresani's house and shop appears to have been sixty ducats per year. The five volumes of Aldo Manuzio's Aristotle cost one and a half to three ducats each; Gaza's Greek grammar sold for one ducat. (These figures are from Lowry 13, 116, 156, 94, 115; see also 98–100 on the expenses of the household and printing shop.)

- 50 For evidence that Torresani's sons were fond of gambling see Curt F. Bühler 'Some Documents concerning the Torresani and the Aldine Press' *The Library* 4th series 25 (1944–5) 118–20.
- 51 Where he can be sure of a cordial welcome and good food. See 'Inns' 370:1–37 on French hospitality.

THE SERAPHIC FUNERAL

Exequiae seraphicae

First printed in the September 1531 edition.

Like the earlier dialogue on Reuchlin this colloquy is a work of creative imagination but based on historical fact. It is one document of many that would merit attention in a comprehensive study of Erasmus' relations with the Franciscan order and his judgment of their claims. He knew and approved of some Franciscans – Vitrier, for example – and presents two worthy Observant Franciscans in 'The Well-to-do Beggars.' More often, however, they are the objects of his criticism, as in 'The Sermon' and the present colloquy. For in recent years (1528–31) he had been the target of repeated attacks and denigration by Observant theologians. His irritation is noticeable in the correspondence of those years (see for example Allen Epp 1968:37–48, 2037:208–18, 2094:1–5, 2126:160–74, 2205:175–263, 2263:105–14, 2275:1–76, 2299:136–47, 2301:15–26, 2315:256–77, 2466:30–5), and in many pages of his controversial works and in the *Colloquies* he comments sharply, at times resentfully, about attacks by Franciscans on his religious opinions and writings.

A 'seraphic funeral' is one in which the corpse is buried in the Franciscan habit, as contrasted with *pro laico sepultura* (see Allen Ep 2449:92–3, 'The Sermon' n2, and n4 below). The occasion of this colloquy was the dying and burial in Franciscan dress of Alberto Pio (c 1475–1531), hereditary prince of Carpi (near Modena in northern Italy), at Paris in January 1531. The antecedent cause was a long quarrel between Erasmus and Alberto Pio. Alberto was a person of distinction: nephew of Pico della Mirandola; in youth a pupil and later a patron of Aldo Manuzio, who dedicated to him his great edition of Aristotle (1495–8); a man of letters well connected in learned circles; a diplomat in the service of Louis XII of France, then of Maximilian the German emperor, and later of Francis I. He survived the sack of Rome in 1527 but lost his estates and principedom of Carpi in the Italian wars. Erasmus, who enjoyed discovering facetious etymologies, decided that Alberto was called *Carpensis a carpendi libidine* 'from his passion for finding fault' and 'Pio' because of his posture of devoutness in donning Franciscan dress three days before his death (Allen Ep 2466:103–8; cf *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1125A–B).

In October 1525 Erasmus heard that he had been slandered in Rome by Girolamo Aleandro (on whom see the introduction to 'Penny-Pinching' 980–1) and Alberto Pio. Aleandro's disparagements were circulated in manuscript

but apparently not printed (Allen Epp 1744:129–36, 1804:248–54). Whereupon Erasmus wrote to Alberto, complaining of reports that Alberto had accused him of being ignorant of philosophy and theology and – even worse – was charging him with heavy responsibility for some of Luther’s teachings (Allen Ep 1634:10–15, 69–74). Charges of this kind were nothing new; they had been made by other critics too, but that fact did not deter Erasmus from taking offence and defending himself vigorously in a pamphlet warfare that lasted as long as he lived. Alberto answered Erasmus’ reproach with a *Responsio accurata et paraenetica* . . . (May 1526; whether it was printed before the Paris 1529 edition is uncertain, but Erasmus evidently saw a manuscript copy). Alberto credited Erasmus with services to literature but insisted that he had injured orthodox religion.

Erasmus went to work at once on a reply, *Responsio ad epistolam paraeneticam Alberti Pii* (Basel, March 1529; text in LB IX 1095A–1122E). When this publication reached Alberto, he read it with predictable indignation and set about as promptly as illness allowed to prepare a counter-attack intended to devastate Erasmus’ claims: *Alberti Pii Carporum* . . . *tres et viginti libri* . . . *in locos lucubrationum variarum D. Erasmi* (Paris 1531). After commenting on Erasmus’ *Responsio*, he lists in twenty-three sections what he perceived to be errors by Erasmus on many subjects: monasticism, churches, clergy, marriage, and confession, among others. Alberto died in January 1531, before his book was printed; it came out in March of that year. It was an important contribution to the polemical literature of the Reformation, for, as Professor Gilmore writes, this was ‘perhaps the most compete expression of the thesis that Erasmus prepared the Reformation and shared the religious opinions of Luther’ (‘Erasmus and Alberto Pio, Prince of Carpi’ in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe* ed Theodore K. Rabb and J.E. Seigel [Princeton 1969] 313). Alberto, needless to say, had supporters who urged him on; among them, Erasmus says, were the Franciscans of Paris (Allen Ep 2443:336–40).

Even though he knew of Alberto’s death, Erasmus wanted to have the last word. He hurriedly composed an *Apologia adversus rhapsodias* . . . *Alberti Pii* (Basel: Froben, June 1531; text reprinted with a different title, probably of Leclerc’s devising, in LB IX 1123A–1196D). He answers Alberto’s charges seriatim and once more sets forth his own views and why these are valid. The peroration of this apology (LB IX 1196A–D) is unusually harsh for Erasmus, and is intended to be harsh. But he did not have the satisfaction of writing the last word in the controversy after all, for Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1491–1572), a friend and client of Alberto, brought out an *Antapologia pro Alberto Pio in Erasmum* (Rome and Paris, March 1532). On Sepúlveda see Allen Ep 2637 introduction and CEBR.

Well before Sepúlveda's defence of Alberto Pio's work appeared, however, a timely coincidence inspired Erasmus to write of his adversary in a different and more effective though characteristic manner. He knew, no later than 6 March 1531, of Alberto's death in January of that year, and also of his burial in Franciscan garb (Allen Ep 2441:64–70). He says on 27 March that he has not yet seen Alberto's posthumous publication against him (Allen Ep 2466:115), but it must have come to hand soon afterwards. In any event he could not have written 'The Seraphic Funeral' before learning the essential fact of Alberto's dying as a Franciscan by intention. Therefore this colloquy was in all probability written between March and September. In the September 1531 edition it was next to last among five new colloquies.

Here then was Erasmus' opportunity not only to strike again at an enemy (whom death had already dispatched) with well-tried weapons of satire and irony, but to raise fundamental questions about Franciscan claims and customs. The purpose of this satire, as he takes pains to make clear, is to correct ignorance and misconduct, to emphasize the difference between the ideals of Francis and the questionable practices of some of his followers. For the claim made by Theotimus, the eulogist and expositor of the benefit of dying in Franciscan dress, is unequivocal: 'A man who makes a profession is instantly enriched by the surpassing merits of the whole order; he is assuredly grafted to the body of a most holy company' (1004:37–9). Friends who shared Erasmus' opinions undoubtedly welcomed such a dialogue. One of them, Johann Koler (Choler, Coler), a canon of Augsburg and frequent correspondent of Erasmus, may have contributed to the shaping of this colloquy when, in a letter of 26 June 1531 expressing impatience to read Erasmus' *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* (published in that same month), he added that news of the dying Alberto's receiving Franciscan dress reminded him of George in Erasmus' colloquy 'The Funeral,' who did the same (Allen Ep 2505:55–60).

Writing on 5 March 1531 to a bishop and sometime papal secretary, Jacopo Sadoleto, Erasmus reports that Alberto Pio died with his new book against Erasmus unprinted. 'That is surely, as the proverb says, "to throw your javelin and flee"' (or 'to shoot and run'; *Adagia* 1 i 5, repeated in Allen Epp 2443:346, 2466:102). To another friend he writes of Alberto, 'I hope his soul finds delights among seraphic minds. For his body, three days before his death, was adorned with Franciscan dress and in that finery was carried through the streets of the city on the shoulders of Franciscans, in solemn procession, to a monastery, with none of the rites omitted that are customarily performed for the true sons of Francis' (Allen Ep 2441:69–76). 'I pray God to have mercy on his soul and I hope he will find better defenders in the presence of the supreme Judge than he himself provided for the French against the emperor

or for the pope against the emperor's forces, or for himself in protecting his principedom' (Allen Ep 2443:347–50). Again: 'Not without reason was he styled "Pius." Three days before his death he donned the robe of St Francis and in that dress was borne on the shoulders of Franciscans through the streets – face, feet, and hands bare – and buried in a monastery. I don't belittle the man's preference for the religious life (it's common with Italians), but I marvel that those fathers [the friars], although not unaware of what this age is like, provoke ill will towards themselves by such ceremonies (superstitions, rather) when that is already more than sufficiently vehement of itself' (Allen Ep 2466:106–14).

Finally, on 20 August 1531, Erasmus writes to another friend to tell him of the 'big book of Alberto Pio, once prince of Carpi, then exile in France, next a sycophant, finally a Franciscan . . . So much for me, as though I condemned everything the church does or teaches! Nor had the man, a prince aged and long sinking to the grave, a sense of shame. Now at last, conjoined with the seraphic band, he spreads deadly slander by his obvious falsehoods' (Allen Ep 2522:65–72; cf *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Albertii Pii* LB IX 1123A–E). 'The Seraphic Funeral' appeared in print a few weeks after these words were written. The polite voice and ironic tone in that dialogue are wholly appropriate to its purpose, but passages like the one just quoted reveal the bitterness Erasmus still felt towards Alberto Pio.

On Pio consult Allen Ep 1634 introduction, CEBR, and studies by Myron P. Gilmore: 'Erasmus and Alberto Pio, Prince of Carpi' in Rabb and Seigel *Action and Conviction* 299–318; 'De modis disputandi: The Apologetic Works of Erasmus' in *Florilegium historicale* ed J.G. Rose and W.H. Stockdale (Toronto 1971) 75–82; a later version of this article appears in *Colloquia Erasmiana Turo-nensia* II 725–32. See also Gilmore's 'Italian Reactions to Erasmian Humanism' in *Itinerarium Italicum* ed H.A. Oberman and Thomas A. Brady Jr (Leiden 1975) 70–84, and 'Apologiae: Erasmus's Defenses of Folly' in *Essays on the Works of Erasmus* ed Richard L. DeMolen (New Haven and London 1978) 111–23.

An English translation of *Exequiae seraphicae*, printed by John Byddell probably c 1534, was recorded in 1595, but no copy is now known. See Devereux 68 no 4.11.

THEOTIMUS AND PHILECOUS¹

Philecous Where does our Theotimus come from with his new religious look?

5 **Theotimus** New? How so?

Philecous Because of the stern brow, eyes glued to the ground, head inclined somewhat to the left shoulder,² rosary in your hands.³

Theotimus If you wish to know what's none of your business, my friend, I come from a show.

Philecous Did you see a rope artist, or a magician, or something of that sort?

5 **Theotimus** Not so very different from that, perhaps.

Philecous Well, I've never before seen anyone back from a show with this sort of countenance.

Theotimus But this show was of such a kind that had you been there, you might have turned up even gloomier than I am.

10 **Philecous** Then tell me, won't you, what's made you so devout?

Theotimus I'm returning from a seraphic funeral.

Philecous What do I hear? So angels die too?

Theotimus No, but their partners do.⁴ But – not to keep you in suspense any longer – you're acquainted, I suppose, with that learned and distinguished

15 man Eusebius,⁵ here in Pelusium?⁶

Philecous The one who was deprived of his office as ruler and from a private citizen became an exile, from an exile virtually a beggar – I had almost added, toady?⁷

Theotimus A good guess.

20 **Philecous** But what happened to him?

Theotimus He was buried today. I'm on my way home from his funeral.

Philecous Must have been quite a sad affair to send you back to us so sad.

Theotimus I fear I can't hold back the tears in describing for you what I've seen.

25 **Philecous** Yet I fear I can't listen without laughter. But do tell me, please.

Theotimus You're aware that Eusebius had long been in wretched health.

Philecous I know that for some years he had been very feeble.

Theotimus In diseases of this kind, which gradually destroy a man, doctors can usually predict the day of death by means of certain tell-tale signs.

30 **Philecous** Of course.

Theotimus They warned the man that everything medical science could do to help him had been done with the utmost care; that God was more powerful than all the resources of physicians; but that by the best human calculation he wouldn't last over three days.⁸

35 **Philecous** What happened then?

Theotimus Straightway the distinguished Eusebius clothes his poor, weak body in complete Franciscan dress; he receives the tonsure, puts on an ashen cowl, a robe of the same colour, a knotted cord, and sandals.⁹

Philecous He's going to die?

40 **Theotimus** Yes. And what's more, he promises in a voice already that of a dying man to enlist as Christ's soldier according to the Franciscan Rule if –

contrary to doctors' expectations – God should grant him life.¹⁰ Witnesses, men noted for their holiness, are fetched for this profession. In this garb the eminent man dies at the time foretold by the doctors. A good many members of the order come to take part in the funeral procession.

5 **Philecous** I wish I had been present at that spectacle!

Theotimus You'd have wept to see how devotedly the seraphic brethren bathed the corpse, fitted that holy garment on it, crossed his hands, bared the feet and kissed them, and even brightened the face with ointment according to gospel precept.¹¹

10 **Philecous** A marvellous humility for seraphic men to act as undertakers and pallbearers!

Theotimus After this they laid him on a bier, and in accordance with Paul's teaching, 'Bear ye one another's burdens,'¹² the brethren bore their brother on their own shoulders through the street to the monastery. There they

15 buried him with solemn dirges. When that holy procession was moving along the street, I observed many persons weeping in spite of themselves at the sight of such a man, whom earlier they had seen clad in purple and fine linen,¹³ now in Franciscan clothing, girded with a hempen cord and made to look so devout from head to foot. For the dead man's head was
20 bent towards his shoulder¹⁴ and (as I said) his hands were placed one across the other. Everything else likewise showed an awesome religious feeling. Yes, and the seraphic company itself, with heads bowed, eyes fixed on the ground, and dirges so mournful that I should think the very ghosts of the dead could not howl more dolefully, drew tears and sobs from many
25 people.

Philecous But didn't he have the five wounds of Francis?¹⁵

Theotimus I couldn't swear to that. Some slightly black-and-blue marks were evident on his hands and feet and his robe had a small hole on the left side.¹⁶ But I didn't dare look too closely, for in such matters, they say,

30 curiosity has been fatal to many.

Philecous But didn't you notice anybody laughing there?

Theotimus I did, but they were heretics, I suspect; the world's full of them these days.

Philecous To be frank with you, my dear Theotimus, I myself could scarcely
35 have refrained from laughter had I seen that sight.

Theotimus God grant you haven't been infected with this same malady!

Philecous No danger of that, my excellent Theotimus. As for me, ever since I was a boy I've always had a sincere, reverent veneration for St Francis, who by worldly standards was neither wise nor learned but was most dear to God
40 by reason of his extreme mortification of worldly desires, and along with him, for all those who, following in his footsteps, endeavour sincerely to live



St Francis receiving the stigmata
Panel painting from the workshop of Giotto
According to St Bonaventure, the stigmata were conferred
by the crucified Christ *sub specie seraph*.
Louvre, Paris

unto Christ, dead to the world.¹⁷ The dress I care nothing about,¹⁸ but I'd be glad to learn from you what good it does a dead man.

Theotimus You know we're commanded by the Lord himself not to cast pearls before swine or give that which is holy unto dogs.¹⁹ If, therefore, you
5 ask for the purpose of ridicule, you'll hear nothing from me. But if you really and truly desire to learn, I'll be glad to tell you what I learned from them.

Philecous I promise to be a good, attentive, and receptive pupil.

Theotimus In the first place, you're aware that some men are so eager for prestige that they're not satisfied with having lived in proud and arrogant
10 fashion unless they can also be buried ostentatiously when they die. Dead, they have no feeling; yet while alive they take a certain pleasure and satisfaction in imagining what their funeral procession will be like. Whatever the worth of renouncing worldly ambitions, you won't, I suppose, deny a certain measure of devotion in it.

Philecous Granted, if pride in funerals can't be avoided by any other means. In my opinion, however, it's more modest for a prince when dead to be wrapped in ordinary linen, carried by common pallbearers to the public cemetery, and there interred among common corpses. For those who are borne to the grave as Eusebius was appear to have changed their pride rather
20 than to have shunned it.

Theotimus Whatever is done with good intent is pleasing to God. Yet it is his prerogative to judge the heart of man. But what I've told you is trifling. The rest is more important.

Philecous What?

Theotimus Before death they profess the Rule of Francis.

Philecous To keep it in the Elysian fields, obviously!

Theotimus No – here, if they recover. And it sometimes happens that men condemned by the verdicts of physicians do get well, by God's help, the moment they don the sacred dress.

Philecous The same thing often happens to those who don't don it.

Theotimus One must walk the way of faith in single-mindedness.²⁰ If there weren't exceptional profit in this custom, there wouldn't be so many men of distinguished birth and eminent scholarship, especially among the Italians, eager to be buried in the sacred garb. And – that you may not reject the
35 examples of men unknown to you – Rodolphus Agricola,²¹ whom you rightly esteem very highly, was buried in this manner. So, recently, was Christopher Longolius.²²

Philecous What men rave about when they're dying makes no difference to me. I want to learn from you what great good it does a man who is
40 overwhelmed by the terror of death and agitated by despair of the certainty of life to make the profession or put on the garb. Why are vows invalid unless

made with clear and serious intent, after mature deliberation, not under pressure of fear, fraud, or force? To avoid these dangers, such profession is not binding until after a year's probation, when the professed are ordered to wear the cloak with hood; for thus saith that seraphic man.²³ And so if they
 5 recover they are not bound, for two reasons: a vow made in overwhelming dread of death or hope of life is no vow, and profession does not bind before the cowl is worn.

Theotimus Whatever the force of the bond, they certainly regard themselves as bound; and the dedication of their whole will cannot but be most pleasing
 10 to God, since it is for this reason that the good works of monks – other things being equal – are more pleasing to God than are the good works of other men; because they proceed from the best source.²⁴

Philecous I won't, at this time, go into the question of how important it may be for a man to dedicate himself completely to God when the matter is no
 15 longer in his power.²⁵ I myself believe that any Christian dedicates himself completely to God in baptism when he renounces all the pomps and vanities of Satan and enlists as a soldier of Christ, to fight for him thereafter as long as life lasts.²⁶ And Paul, treating of those who die unto Christ, so that they now live not to themselves but to him who died for them, does not refer
 20 especially to monks but to all Christians.²⁷

Theotimus Your reminder about baptism is apropos, but in old times the dying were dipped in water or sprinkled.²⁸ By that means they were given hope of eternal life.

Philecous What bishops promise doesn't matter so much; what God may
 25 be pleased to bestow is unknown to us. Had it been certain that by such sprinkling with drops of water men suddenly become citizens of heaven, what greater opportunity could there have been²⁹ for the worldly to indulge their wicked lusts to their heart's content all their lives and then at the last get a little sprinkling when they no longer had the power to sin?³⁰ But
 30 if this profession corresponds to such a baptism, clearly it is planned for sinners, so they won't perish; in other words, live unto Satan and die unto Christ!

Theotimus Nay – if it is lawful to divulge any seraphic mysteries – their profession is more efficacious than that of baptism.

35 **Philecous** What do I hear?

Theotimus In baptism sins are only washed away; the soul is left pure but destitute. A man who makes a profession is instantly enriched by the surpassing merits of the whole order; he is assuredly grafted to the body of a most holy company.

40 **Philecous** So he who through baptism is grafted to the body of Christ receives nothing, either from head or body?

Theotimus Nothing from the seraphic accumulation unless he deserves it for a kindness or favour.

Philecous What angel revealed this to them?

Theotimus No angel, my good friend, but Christ himself with his own mouth disclosed this and many other things personally to St Francis.

Philecous I beg you, I beseech you, in the name of our friendship, don't hesitate to share those words with me.

Theotimus They are most secret mysteries, nor is it permissible to communicate them to the profane.

10 **Philecous** What do you mean, 'profane,' my friend? I've never wished better to any order than to the seraphic one.

Theotimus But you taunt them rather offensively at times.

Philecous This in itself is proof of affection, Theotimus. Since none do that order more damage than those who live under its shadow unworthily,³¹ it is
15 necessary for anyone who wishes the order well to be very angry with its subverters.

Theotimus I'm afraid of incurring Francis' anger if I blab his secrets.

Philecous What harm do you fear from that most harmless man?

Theotimus What? That he may blind me or drive me mad, as he is said to
20 have done to many who spoke against the marks of his five wounds.

Philecous So saints are more vindictive in heaven than they were on earth? Francis, I've heard, had so gentle a nature that when boys along the road put cheese, milk, rubbish, and stones into the rustic cowl hanging down his back, he was not at all offended but went along cheerful and happy.
25 And has he now become irascible and vengeful? On another day, after hearing a companion call him thief, perpetrator of sacrilege, murderer, drunkard, committer of incest, and whatever crimes the worst criminal could be accused of, he thanked the man abjectly, pleading guilty to the charges. When a friend wondered why he talked like this, he said, 'All these things
30 and worse had I done had not God's goodness preserved me.'³² How is it he has now become vengeful?

Theotimus That's the way it is: saints reigning in heaven won't take insults. What could be more mild than Cornelius,³³ more gentle than Antony,³⁴ more patient than John the Baptist³⁵ while they lived? But now what terrible
35 afflictions they send unless they're properly venerated!³⁶

Philecous I'd have been readier to believe they remove maladies rather than inflict them. But what you tell me you won't be confiding to a profane person; and you may be assured I'll keep my mouth shut.

Theotimus Well, then, taking your word for that, I'll tell you the relevant
40 facts of the matter. (I beseech thee and thy brethren, O Francis, that by thy gracious favour I may lawfully declare what I have heard.) Paul, you know,

possessed a secret wisdom he uttered not in public but privately, among the perfect.³⁷ So too have the Franciscans certain secrets³⁸ they don't divulge to just anybody but impart confidentially to holy widows and other devout and chosen persons who are kind to the seraphic flock.

5 **Philecous** I await the thrice-sacred revelation.³⁹

Theotimus First of all, God foretold to the seraphic patriarch that the larger the seraphic flock grew, the more abundantly he would nourish it.⁴⁰

Philecous This immediately cancels every complaint of those who insist that the daily increase in men of this sort is a public nuisance.

10 **Theotimus** Next, he revealed that annually, on the feast day of Francis,⁴¹ all souls, not only of the brethren who wear that sacred garb but also of those well disposed towards the order and of those deserving well of the members, would be released from the fire of purgatory.⁴²

Philecous Did Christ usually converse with him so informally?

15 **Theotimus** Why not? As with a friend and companion, just as God the Father used to converse with Moses. Moses delivered to the people the law received from God. Christ promulgated the gospel law. Francis handed on to the seraphic brethren his own law, written twice by the hand of an angel.⁴³

20 **Philecous** I await the third revelation.

Theotimus That excellent patriarch feared lest the enemy destroy by night the good seed which was sown and thus the wheat be rooted up with the tares. This anxiety the Lord removed, promising him he would see to it that the half-shod and rope-girded tribe should fail not, even unto the final Day of Judgment.⁴⁴

25 **Philecous** O the mercy of the Lord! Otherwise God's church had been done for. – But continue.

Theotimus Fourth, he revealed that no one of wicked life could long continue in that order.⁴⁵

30 **Philecous** Hasn't one who lives sinfully fallen away from the order?

Theotimus No, for a wrongdoer hasn't denied Christ straightway; though men whose deeds belie their promises do deny God in some sense.⁴⁶ But whoever throws off the sacred garb has fallen away from the order irreparably.

35 **Philecous** What are we to say, then, of so many monasteries of Conventuals who possess money, who drink, dice, fornicate, and openly keep concubines at home, to say no more?

Theotimus Francis never wore habit of that shade – it's too dark! – nor did he use a girdle of white cord.⁴⁷ Therefore, when they knock at the door, it shall be said, 'I know you not,' because they have no wedding garment.⁴⁸

40 **Philecous** Is there anything more?

Theotimus So far you've heard nothing. In the fifth place, Christ revealed to him that those ill disposed towards the seraphic order – of whom, alas! there are too many – would never complete half their divinely allotted span of life unless they anticipated their end, but all would die a terrible death as swiftly as possible.⁴⁹

Philecous At various times we've seen this sort of thing happen to many others, and recently to Cardinal Matthew of Sion,⁵⁰ who used to speak and think very ill of the half-shod. He died before reaching his fiftieth year, I believe.

Theotimus You're right, but he had also attacked the cherubic order. For according to report, it was due mostly to his efforts that the four Dominicans were consigned to the flames at Bern,⁵¹ when otherwise they would have won the pope over with money.

Philecous But those men, it is said, contrived a fiction of shocking wickedness. By faked apparitions and bogus miracles they tried to persuade people that the Virgin Mary had been tainted with original sin; that St Francis had not had the true marks of Christ's wounds; that those of Catherine of Siena⁵² were more authentic, but that the most perfect stigmata were promised to a converted layman whom they had secretly bribed to play this role; and for the purpose of this imposture they took liberties with the host and later used even clubs and poisons. In short, this plot was not the work of one monastery, they say, but of the heads of the entire order.⁵³

Theotimus However that may be, God did not say without reason, 'Touch not mine anointed.'⁵⁴

Philecous I'm waiting, if there's anything else.

Theotimus There's the sixth revelation, in which the Lord swore to him that patrons of the seraphic order, no matter how sinfully they lived, would nevertheless obtain the Lord's mercy sooner or later and would close a wicked life with a blessed end.⁵⁵

Philecous Even if they were killed when caught in the act of adultery?⁵⁶

Theotimus What the Lord hath promised cannot fail of accomplishment.

Philecous But precisely how do they measure patronage and good will, then?

Theotimus Oh, you're uncertain about that? Whoever gives something, provides food or clothing, has long loved the order.

Philecous Doesn't one who gives instruction and admonition love it?

Theotimus They've plenty of that at home; and such favours they're in the habit of conferring on others, not accepting from others.

Philecous Then the Lord has promised more to the disciples of Francis than to his own. If a kindness is done to any Christian for his sake, he suffers it to be ascribed to him,⁵⁷ but he does not promise eternal life to those who live wickedly.

Theotimus Nothing wonderful about that, my friend, for the utmost power of the gospel was reserved to this order. But now listen to the seventh and last revelation.

Philecous I'm here.

- 5 **Theotimus** The Lord swore to him that no one who died in seraphic garb would come to a bad end.⁵⁸

Philecous But what do you call a bad end?

Theotimus A man comes to a bad end if his soul, after leaving the body, is borne straight to hell, from which there is no redemption.

- 10 **Philecous** So the garb does not release one from the fire of purgatory?

Theotimus No, unless one dies on the feast day of St Francis.⁵⁹ But does protection against hell seem a small matter to you?

Philecous For my part, I think it a very great matter indeed. But what's to be thought of those who are dressed in the sacred garb after they're already

- 15 dead? They don't *die* in it.

Theotimus If they sought this while alive, the wish is taken for the deed.⁶⁰

- Philecous** When I was in Antwerp I was present, along with other kin, at the death of a certain matron. A Franciscan was there, a man who commanded great respect. When he noticed the woman was already gasping
- 20 for breath, he put one of her arms up his sleeve, so that it even touched part of his shoulder. Some people present were undecided whether the whole woman or the part that had been covered would be safe from the gates of hell.⁶¹

- Theotimus** The whole woman was safe, just as in baptism part of a person
- 25 is dipped in water but all of him made Christian.

Philecous It is amazing how devils⁶² are terrified of that garment.

Theotimus More terrified than they are of the Lord's cross. When Eusebius was borne to his grave I saw – and not I alone – troops of black devils, in the form of flies, attacking the corpse, yet none of them dared to touch it.

- 30 **Philecous** But meantime his face, hands, and feet were in danger, since they were exposed.

Theotimus As snakes can't bear the shade of an ash tree, though it extend a considerable distance,⁶³ so devils feel the bane of that sacred dress even from afar.

- 35 **Philecous** Consequently, I don't think such bodies decay, else worms would have more courage than devils.

Theotimus Very true.

Philecous How lucky the lice who live forever in so holy a garment!⁶⁴ But when the garment is brought to the grave, what is it that protects the soul?

- 40 **Theotimus** The garment takes the shade⁶⁵ along with it and keeps it safe; so safe that no member of that order, they insist, comes to the fire of purgatory.

Philecous If what you say is true, I rate this revelation above John's. Indeed this one shows a quick and easy way of escaping eternal death without labour, without trouble, without penance, after a whole lifetime spent agreeably in pleasure.

5 **Theotimus** I agree.

Philecous Accordingly I no longer wonder if many persons attribute a great deal to the seraphic brethren. But I can't get over the fact that there's no lack of people who don't hesitate to deride them.

Theotimus You ought to realize that those people, however many you see,
10 are given over to depraved feeling and blinded by their own malice.⁶⁶

Philecous Hereafter I'll be more careful; and I'll try to die in the holy habit. But some men may be found in our day who teach that man is justified by faith alone, without the aid of works.⁶⁷ It would be the greatest boon, therefore, if a garment should confer a blessing without faith.

15 **Theotimus** Not merely without faith; don't be mistaken, Philecous.⁶⁸ To believe that what I have told you was promised by Christ to the patriarch Francis is sufficient.

Philecous Will the garment save even a Turk, then?

Theotimus Even Satan himself, if he allowed it to be put on and trusted the
20 revelation.

Philecous You won me over long ago, but I'd like you to rid me of one or two difficulties.

Theotimus Say on.

Philecous I've heard that Francis calls his way of life an evangelical one.

25 **Theotimus** Correct.

Philecous But all Christians profess the rule of the gospel, at least in my opinion. Now if their way of life is an evangelical one, it follows that as many as are Christians are also Franciscans.⁶⁹ And among these, Christ, with his apostles and his most blessed Mother, will hold first place.

30 **Theotimus** You would persuade me, surely, were it not that Francis had added some things to Christ's gospel.

Philecous What?

Theotimus The ashen garb, hempen cord, and bare feet.

Philecous By those marks, then, we distinguish the evangelical Christian
35 from the Franciscan?

Theotimus They differ also with regard to their contact with money.⁷⁰

Philecous Yet, as I hear, Francis forbids it to be *received*, not touched. But either the master or procurator or creditor or heir or commissioner receives it.⁷¹ And though protected by gloves when he counts it,⁷² he is said to have
40 received it nonetheless. Whence this new interpretation, that not to receive it means not to touch it?

Theotimus Pope Benedict so interpreted.

Philecous But as a Franciscan, not as pope. Apart from that: don't the most observant of Observants, when they travel, receive money in a linen cloth?⁷³

Theotimus They do so when necessity compels them.

- 5 **Philecous** But it's better to die than break the more than evangelical Rule. Secondly, don't they receive money here and there through their agents?

Theotimus Why not, even if they're given some thousands – as happens not infrequently?

Philecous But the Rule says 'neither by themselves nor through others.'

- 10 **Theotimus** But they don't *touch* it.

Philecous Nonsense. If touch is unholy, still they touch it through others.

Theotimus But they have no dealings with fiscal agents.

Philecous Don't they? Anyone who has a mind to could put that theory to the test!

- 15 **Theotimus** Christ is said never to have touched money.

Philecous Granted, though probably Christ as a little boy often bought butter, vinegar, and herbs for his parents. But unquestionably Peter and Paul touched it. Praise for holiness of life lies not in avoiding contact with money but in despising it. Contact with wine is much more dangerous than with money. Why aren't they afraid of that danger?

- 20 **Theotimus** Because Francis didn't forbid it.

Philecous Don't they stretch out their hands, soft from a lazy life and beautifully washed,⁷⁴ for ladies' greetings, and when perchance some money is offered to their gaze, jump back and defend themselves with the sign of the cross – Lord, how evangelically! Now I'm confident that Francis, though he may have been entirely uneducated,⁷⁵ was not such a fool as to forbid any and all contact with money. Yet if he did mean that, to what risk did he expose his flock, whom he commanded to walk in their bare feet,⁷⁶ since it can hardly be avoided that, without knowing it, they step on money that's lying on the ground.

- 30 **Theotimus** But they don't touch it with their hands.⁷⁷

Philecous Doesn't the sense of touch apply to the whole body?

Theotimus Yes. And if such a thing does happen they don't say mass unless they've confessed.

- 35 **Philecous** How scrupulous!

Theotimus But all quibbling aside, I'll tell you how the matter stands. To many persons, money is and will remain a source of the greatest evils.

Philecous Admitted, but to others the same money is the means of many benefits. I read that the love of riches is condemned;⁷⁸ that money is

- 40 condemned I don't read.

Theotimus You're right. But contact with it was thus forbidden that they might be further removed from the vice of avarice, just as in the Gospel we are forbidden to swear lest we fall into perjury.⁷⁹

Philecous Then why isn't looking at it forbidden?

5 **Theotimus** Because restraining the hands is easier than restraining the eyes.

Philecous Yet death has entered through those windows.⁸⁰

Theotimus And therefore those who are truly Franciscans pull their cowls down over their brows and walk with eyes covered and fixed on the ground, lest they see anything except the road; just as we observe that horses drawing
10 loaded wagons wear leather blinders to prevent them from seeing anything except what is in front of them.

Philecous But tell me, now: is it true, as I hear, that the Rule forbids the procuring of an indult from the pope?⁸¹

Theotimus It is.

15 **Philecous** Yet I hear that no class of men is furnished with more indults – to such an extent that they may kill by poison or bury alive persons condemned by their sentence without the slightest risk of irregularity.⁸²

Theotimus That's no mere story you've heard. A certain Pole, a man by no means given to lying, told me he had slept off a bout of drunkenness in
20 the Franciscan church, in that corner where women sit when they confess through metal gratings. Awakened by the night Office, he didn't dare show himself. After the nocturns had been sung as usual, the whole band of brethren descended into the crypt. There a pit, fairly wide and deep, had been dug. Two young men, hands tied behind their backs, were standing by.
25 A sermon was preached in praise of obedience. They were assured that God would pardon all their transgressions. Some hope was even held out that God might incline the minds of the brethren to mercy if they went down into the pit of their own accord and lay down on their backs. They did so; the ladder was pulled up; and instantly everyone heaped earth on them.

30 **Philecous** But did the witness keep quiet while this was going on?

Theotimus Certainly, since he was very much afraid that if he showed himself, a third man would be added to the grave.

Philecous Is even this allowed them?

Theotimus Yes, whenever the honour of the order is at stake. – As soon as
35 he escaped he related far and wide, at every dinner party, what he had seen, arousing the great hatred of the seraphic tribe. Wouldn't it have been better for him to be buried alive?

Philecous Perhaps. But all quibbling aside, how does it happen that though the founding father bade them walk barefoot,⁸³ nowadays they go about in
40 sandals for the most part?

Theotimus This rule was made more lenient for two reasons: first, that they might not touch money unawares; secondly that cold or thorns or snakes or flinty stones or some such thing wouldn't harm them, since they must walk all over the world. But to avoid violating the integrity of the Rule, the slit in the sandal shows the bare foot – part for the whole.⁸⁴

Philecous They affirm that they're vowed to evangelical perfection, which consists, they say, in the counsels of the gospel. About those, fierce quarrels rage among scholars. There's room for evangelical perfection in every walk of life. But among all the evangelical precepts, which do you think especially perfect?

Theotimus In my opinion, everything Matthew sets forth in the fifth chapter, ending thus: 'Love your enemies . . . do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust . . . Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.'⁸⁵

Philecous Well answered. But that Father is rich and bounteous to all and does not beg from anyone.

Theotimus They too are bounteous, but in spiritual treasures, that is, in prayers and good works, whereof they have great store.

Philecous Would that among them were examples of gospel love, which repays slanders with blessings and injury with kindness! What's the meaning of Pope Alexander's famous dictum that it is safer to offend a mighty king than anyone belonging to the Franciscan or Dominican order?⁸⁶

Theotimus An affront to the dignity of the order must be revenged; and a wrong done unto one of the least of these is done to the whole order.⁸⁷

Philecous But why isn't it, rather, that the good done to one be done to the whole order? And why doesn't an affront to one Christian excite the whole Christian world to revenge? Why didn't Paul, so often beaten and stoned,⁸⁸ cry for help against the violators of his apostolic dignity? Now if, according to the saying of the Lord, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,'⁸⁹ then assuredly the man who, living and teaching righteously, gives of his substance to the needy is more excellent than the one who merely accepts it. Otherwise Paul boasts in vain that he had preached the gospel without charge.⁹⁰ And the special test of that much-praised devotion seems to be this: whether men can restrain their wrath when slandered, whether they can feel charitable towards those who ill deserve it. What merit is there if a man – who's going to live more comfortably at another's expense – gives up some of his money when he nurses a desire for vengeance? Of rope-girded, half-shod men we have everywhere a great plenty.⁹¹ One who would practise

what the Lord calls perfect⁹² – what the apostles constantly displayed – is indeed a rare bird⁹³ among them.

Theotimus I'm not unaware of the gossip some of the godless circulate about them; but for my part, I'm so taken with them that whenever I see
5 that most holy garb I think God's angels are present and that house blessed whose threshold is worn down by their feet.

Philecous And as for me, I think that there are fewer barren women where they are frequent visitors! But may Francis be merciful to me, Theotimus, so mistaken have I been up to now. I used to consider their dress nothing but
10 dress, no better in itself than that of a sailor or cobbler unless enhanced by the holiness of the wearer – as Christ's garment, when touched, healed the woman who had an issue of blood.⁹⁴ Otherwise I'd have been uncertain whether the weaver or the keeper of the wardrobe had conferred that power on it.

Theotimus Whoever gives the form gives the power, unquestionably.

15 **Philecous** Hereafter I'll live a more carefree life and not torture myself with the fear of hell, the tedium of confession, or the torment of penance.

NOTES

1 Theotimus means 'pious,' 'God-fearing'; Philecous, 'eager to hear.'

2 See 'The Sermon' 941:32, where we are told that Merdardus' head leans towards the right shoulder. The right side was the usual position of honour in Christian art and in heraldic and iconological convention. In some representations of the crucifixion, especially in wood carvings, Christ faces front. In what is said to be the earliest surviving representation of Christ crucified, a wooden panel in the church of Santa Sabina in Rome (c 430), he looks straight ahead (CHB II 536 and plate 5). In a few others his head is bowed; in still others it leans to the left. For examples see Gertrud Schiller *Iconography of Christian Art* trans Janet Seligman, 2 vols (Greenwich, Conn 1971–2) II plates 337, 494, 666. In plate 494 Christ's head is turned left and upward. A drawing of the crucifixion by Michelangelo shows Christ with head upright but turned to the left. (This is thought to be a preliminary drawing for a painting made for Vittoria Colonna c 1545. It is reproduced in *The Complete Paintings of Michelangelo* ed Ettore Camesasca [New York 1966] 106, also in R.H. Bainton *Women of the Reformation in Germany and Italy* [Minneapolis 1971; repr Boston 1974] 215. See Guido Cimino *Il crucifisso di Michelangelo per Vittoria Colonna* [Rome 1967], a reference I owe to Bainton). But the customary posture shows the head leaning to the right.

Why then is Theotimus described as having his head turned to the left? Attentive reading of this colloquy may give a clue. The statement is merely the first of many indications of Theotimus' fallible self-assurance. If the man who believes every legend about St Francis, however far-fetched, makes an elementary blunder of this kind and on this subject, it is not surprising that he is equally forgetful or ignorant about much else in his defence of Francis and Franciscans.

- 3 The opening lines of a satire of Observants, *Franciscus ad fratres* (1538), by George Buchanan, the Scottish poet, scholar, and historian, resemble these lines and may have been suggested by Erasmus' colloquy.
- 4 Franciscans were the 'seraphic' order (see 'The Sermon' n2), Dominicans the 'cherubic' order. Seraphim are named only once in the Bible, in Isa 6:2–7, which is the source of their presence in subsequent Christian literature and art. Seraphim and cherubim were the highest of the choirs of angels in the *Celestial Hierarchy* traditionally attributed to Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite c 500 AD. See also Dante *Paradiso* canto 28. 'Partners' (*sodales*) refers to mortal men who profess 'seraphic' or Franciscan teachings.
- 5 Alberto Pio, the 'pious' or 'devout.' 'Eusebius' is the Latin transliteration of the equivalent Greek word.
- 6 Paris, where Alberto Pio died. *Lutetia*, the Latin name for Paris, recalls *lutum* 'mud,' which is the equivalent of Greek *πηλός*. Derivation of *Lutetia* from *lutum* is found elsewhere too; see 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n48. Perhaps 'Pelusium' is additionally appropriate here because of Alberto Pio's 'mud-slinging' habits (Smith *Key* 54).
- 7 See the introduction 996 above. The allusions refer to Pio's loss of his title and estates, exile in France, and dependence in his last days on the bounty of Francis I. 'Toady' (*sycophantam*) may refer to that dependence or to some shady dealings at an earlier time.
- 8 Other accounts by Erasmus of Alberto Pio's dying mention the interval of three days. Cf 'The Funeral' 767:3–12, where George's physicians wait until they receive their fees before warning that the patient is near death.
- 9 The description of Francis' dress in the dream Erasmus describes in one of his letters is slightly different; see n17 below. On variations in the Franciscan habit see 'The Sermon' n14; on sandals vs bare feet, n76 below.
- 10 In *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii*, Erasmus remarks how much better it would have been for Pio to repeat a psalm describing Christ's passion (LB IX 1125A). That is what the godly Cornelius does in 'The Funeral' 779:4–6.
- 11 Matt 26:6–13, in which Jesus commends the woman who anointed his head with ointment 'for my burial'
- 12 Gal 6:2
- 13 *purpura byssoque*, the phrase used of the rich man in Luke 16:19
- 14 See n2 above.
- 15 The wounds or 'marks' (stigmata) in the hands, feet, and side of Francis, corresponding to the five wounds of the crucified Christ. Some narratives tell of their bleeding, others of excrescences or impressions of nails. The stigmata were believed by the faithful to have been received by Francis in an ecstatic experience (September 1224) on the mountain top of Alvernia or La Verna (see 'The Sermon' n2). This event became known almost immediately to a very few of Francis' companions, soon afterwards to others, and before his death (October 1226) to many. It is described in devout language in early lives of the saint, including the two memoirs by his first biographer, Thomas of Celano; these are known as 1 Celano, written as early as 1228, and 2 Celano, completed in 1246–7. See 1 Celano sections 94–5, 2 Celano sections 135–8. Other sources are St Bonaventure's *Legenda maior* chapter 13; *The Legend of the Three Companions* chapter 17; and a very important addition to the *Fioretti* on the

five 'considerations on the holy stigmata' by an unidentified author who may have been a contributor to 1 Celano. In 1260 the general chapter of the order instructed Bonaventure, then the master-general, to prepare a new life, which should supersede all the others. Bonaventure's became a classic but never completely replaced Celano's or the collection of anecdotes in the *Fioretti* or the *Legend of the Three Companions*. Translations of these texts are conveniently available in *St. Francis of Assisi, Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis* ed Marion A. Habig (Chicago 1973).

Christians regarded all wounds (stigmata) or physical injuries received in the Lord's service as badges of honour. So Paul writes: 'From henceforth let no man trouble you; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus' (Eph 6:17). See for other examples F. Arndt and F. Gingrich *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago and Cambridge 1957) *στίγμα*.

Erasmus always praised Francis' holiness and charity, but his judgment and writing about the saint were tempered by a characteristic scepticism about hagiography. Nor is it at all surprising that the Francis he saw in a dream bore no traces of the stigmata shown by painters and described by panegyrists (Allen Ep 2700:51-2). Collections of stories about saints and miracles were too numerous, and many of the tales too marvellous, to impress him. The true marvel of St Francis was that although dedicated to poverty and a life of utmost simplicity, he drew so many followers by the example of his spirituality. See *Ecclesiastes* LB v 841F and 912C-D.

- 16 In Christian art Christ's fifth wound, caused when one of the attendant soldiers pierced his side with a lance (John 19:34), is usually on his right side. Similarly in most representations of St Francis the wound or mark is on his right side. Giotto's painting, in the Chiesa di Santa Croce at Florence, of Francis receiving the stigmata is one of many examples. Brother Elias' letter, written very soon after Francis' death, does not say which side was pierced. Testimony in *The Three Companions* chapter 17 specifies the right side, as do 1 Celano section 95, 'The Third Consideration on the Stigmata,' the story about Brother Rufino in 'The Fourth Consideration,' and Bonaventure *Legenda maior* 13.3. Many illustrations in Schiller *Iconography of Christian Art* (n2 above) confirm this report.

Theotimus in the colloquy, however, speaks of the hole in Alberto Pio's Franciscan robe as being on the left side. This need not be taken as an error, or an authorial device to discredit Theotimus, but simply recourse to a different tradition. In ecclesiastical art from northern Italy, Christ's wound is sometimes on his left side, 'and consequently in pictures or reliefs that represent the doubting Thomas approaching his Master, the disciple comes from the spectator's right, advancing to touch the wound in the Saviour's left side' (C.R. Morey *Christian Art* [London, New York, Toronto 1935] 11). Furthermore Schiller directs attention to the connection, in the late Middle Ages, between the tradition of the five wounds and the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (*Iconography of Christian Art* II 194-6). If the mark or wound is on the saint's left side, the artist is clearly responsive to the devotion of the Sacred Heart, as if the lance penetrated to the heart.

- 17 A paraphrase of various expressions in the New Testament (Col 2:20, 3:3; cf Rom 6:2, Gal 6:14, Phil 1:21). On this phrase see 'The Old Men's Chat' n62. Here

it is meant seriously, but Erasmus sometimes uses it ironically. On carrying virtues in one's heart instead of boasting about them see 'Cyclops' 865:15-31, 866:26-867:9.

Of particular interest for readers of 'The Seraphic Funeral' is a passage in a letter printed by Erasmus in 1532. The letter was written 9 August in that year to a young friend, Karel Uutenhove (on whom see 'Knucklebones' n1). It tells of a dream 'after midnight' in which St Francis appeared and spoke to Erasmus (Allen Ep 2700:37-53). His opponents, Erasmus says, imagine the saint is angry with him because of what he has written about men who 'promise heaven to those who are buried in Franciscan dress.' These critics are mistaken, for in the dream Francis looked kindly upon him and thanked him warmly for disclosing what needed correction – things Francis himself had always detested – and he then gives assurance that Erasmus is enrolled among friends of the order. Francis 'was not dressed as he is shown in pictures; he did not have a woollen robe of different colours but of dusky wool undyed, "undipped" as the Greeks say, just as it was when clipped from the sheep. He did not have a peaked cowl but a hood attached to the back of his tunic with which he could cover his head in a downpour – the sort of thing we see in the dress of some of the Irish. Nor had he a fancy knotted cord; it was unknotted, plain, like a peasant's. His robe did not reach the ground but was a palm [about eight inches] or more above his ankles. Nor did he wear sandals but was entirely barefoot. I saw no traces whatever of the five wounds [the stigmata] shown in paintings. As he took his leave, he gave me his right hand, saying "Fight the good fight; you will soon be one of mine."' The picture of a credible Francis, as Erasmus liked to think of him. Surprisingly, it omits mention of avoiding money, a question that fills several pages of the colloquy, but perhaps there is a hint of that subject in the phrase about 'what needed correction.'

After telling of his dream of St Francis, Erasmus refers to the six *alae* or 'wings' of the seraph. These are interpreted by St Bonaventure as 'six graded illuminations which begin with creatures and lead us to God whom no one rightly reaches except through the Crucified . . . six steps of contemplation leading from creatures to God' (so A.C. Pegis 'St. Bonaventure, St. Francis and Philosophy' *Mediaeval Studies* 15 [1953] 4). They comprise zeal for justice, compassion, patience, exemplary life, prudent discernment, and devotion to God. For Bonaventure's exposition of them see his *De sex alis seraphim* trans J. de Vinck in *The Works of Bonaventure* III: *Opuscula*, 2nd series (Paterson, NJ 1966) 133-96. Erasmus names the wings as complete obedience, evangelical poverty, spotless chastity, profound humility, peaceful simplicity, and seraphic charity (Allen Ep 2700:55-9). He adds, about the Franciscans, 'Would that they all carried these in their hearts as well as within their robes,' alluding to their custom of carrying a copy of the Rule with them.

Erasmus owned a copy of the Rule and of the *Testamentum* that was dictated by Francis in his last days; the two texts were often printed together (see Husner in *Gedenkschrift* 244 no 387). This fact, however, merely confirms what was already known from Erasmus' writings: that he was not only interested but well informed with respect to Franciscan literature, leaders, customs, and legends.

- 18 To Philecous, religious dress is merely a means of identification, whereas Theotimus likes to think it has real talismanic power. Erasmus often dwells on the variety of superstitions attached to dress; see for example, in the *Colloquies*, 'A Fish Diet' 705:3–32, 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 329:3–330:4, 'The Well-to-Do Beggars' 480:3–15, 'The Council of Women' 909:22–910:14. Notice that Erasmian opinions on this subject in 'The Well-to-Do Beggars' are expressed by an Observant Franciscan.

That spiritual benefits might be won by retiring from the world and becoming a monk or nun had been the conviction and refuge of many Christians throughout the history of monasticism and before. Similarly, benefits could be gained after death, according to medieval belief, by donning a monk's or friar's costume when near death. After the mendicant orders were founded, the idea of seeking safety in friar's dress soon appeared. Also, by a gift of money to be used on behalf of an order, one could win the privilege, through a 'letter of fraternity,' of receiving the prayers of the brethren and, dressed in the order's habit, be buried in their monastery or cemetery ([On religious and their privileges], Tanner I 647, and see Moorman 514–16). This custom existed in other orders as well as the Franciscan. Poliziano, the Italian humanist scholar greatly admired by Erasmus, was buried in a Dominican habit; so was Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. Desire for such a death and burial could be a sign of true piety or, at the other extreme, credulity or superstition. The contrast between the dressing of George in a friar's robe and the dismissal of all such trumpery by Cornelius in 'The Funeral' is typical of Erasmus, whose other allusions to burial of laymen in a habit are consistently depreciatory or ironical. For a few examples see Allen Ep 447:504–9 / CWE Ep 447:554–60; Allen Epp 1805:312–17, 1886:73–6, 1891:243–59, 2700:73–8, 2899:31–6; *Enchiridion* LB V 31D–E / CWE 66 72; *Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 136C–D; *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1305E; *Lingua* LB IV 716F / ASD IV-1A 123:199–124:200 / CWE 29 355.

- 19 Matt 7:6

20 Cf the Vulgate *simplicitate cordis* in Acts 2:46; Eph 6:5; Col 3:22.

- 21 A native of Groningen, Rodolphus Agricola (1444–85) was eminent as one of the early humanists of northern Europe. After studies in Germany, at Louvain, and possibly Paris, he went to Italy, where he learned Greek, made translations from Greek into Latin, and wrote a treatise on logic in rhetoric, *De inventione dialectica*, which was reprinted more than fifty times, and *De formando studio*, a defence of humanistic studies. At one time he was the instructor of Alexander Hegius, Erasmus' teacher in Deventer. To Erasmus he was an exemplar as well as an expositor of 'good letters' and moreover a fellow countryman whom he delighted to praise: 'among the Greeks he was the best Greek of them all, among the Latins the best Latin . . . a second Virgil' (*Adagia* I iv 39); 'the glory and ornament of our Germany' (*Ratio* LB V 79A and *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 882c); 'worthy of eternal fame' (*Ecclesiastes* LB V 920F). See CEBR; two studies in *Itinerarium Italicum: The Profile of the Italian Renaissance in the Mirror of its European Transformations* ed Heiko A. Oberman and Thomas A. Brady Jr, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 14 (Leiden 1975): Josef IJsewijn 'The Coming of Humanism in the Low Countries' 193–301 and Lewis W. Spitz 'The Course of German Humanism' 371–436, especially 400–2; and R.J. Schoeck 'Agricola and Erasmus: Erasmus' Inheritance of Northern

- Humanism' in *Rodolphus Agricola Phrisius 1444–1485* ed F. Akkerman and A.J. Vanderjagt (Leiden 1988) 181–8.
- 22 Christophe de Longueil (c 1488–1522), regarded as a brilliant young scholar and man of letters. He studied Greek in Italy, where he made many friends but annoyed other Italians by his excessive praise of the French. In 1519 he wrote in a letter to a friend an interesting and perceptive comparison of Budé and Erasmus as writers, weighing the merits and weaknesses of each. For the text see Ep 914 and for Erasmus' comments Ep 935.
- In Longueil's own writings Erasmus detected an over-anxious affectation of Ciceronian diction (Allen Ep 1675:19–20). Consequently some readers have thought the character Nosoponus, a pedantic imitator of Ciceronian style in Erasmus' *Ciceronianus* (1528), was modelled on Longueil. See Allen Ep 914 introduction and CEBR; CWE 28 324–6.
- Erasmus says that Longueil died 'recently,' but Longueil died in 1522.
- 23 Ie Francis, in the Rule of 1221, 2.7; of 1223, 2.12
- 24 Commenting on Matt 24:23, 'If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not,' Erasmus ridicules the rival claims of regulars and seculars. 'Christ is not divided ... Wherever there are feelings worthy of Christ, he is present' (*Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 125D).
- 25 With this discussion of vows compare 'Rash Vows'; 'A Fish Diet' 693:34–694:22, 697:36–699:1.
- 26 Cf *Paraclesis* LB V 142F–143A. On the meaning of baptism see 'The Godly Feast' n229; 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' nn27 and 57; 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' 332:4–7. For a defence of his writings on this subject see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 820A–822E, and for a summary of his opinions John Payne *Erasmus: His Theology of the Sacraments* (Richmond 1970) 155–78.
- 27 Romans 6 is the key text. See also 2 Cor 5:15; Col 3:3; 2 Tim 2:11.
- 28 On methods of baptism see 'The Godly Feast' n227.
- 29 Literally 'what larger window could have been opened'; cf *Adagia* I iv 3.
- 30 The perilous folly of postponing baptism until near the end of life is condemned in *De praeparatione ad mortem* LB V 1305F and *De concordia* LB V 479D–E. In the early centuries of Christianity such delay was common, as Theotimus observes, but in the sixth century and thereafter infant baptism was the general custom and became universal among the orthodox. Paul alludes to baptism on behalf of the dead (1 Cor 15:29). Erasmus has no comment on this topic in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum*.
- 31 Said with specific reference to Franciscans in *Ecclesiastes* LB V 885B, and cf 961B–C; Allen Ep 2700:25–6. See also 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 482:1–4 and cf 'The Usefulness of the Colloquies' 1104:35–1105:11, 35–9 (on the friars in 'The Funeral').
- 32 These lines derive from Erasmus' recollections of various passages in the Franciscan literature he had read: legends met in Giovanni di Ceprano, Thomas of Celano's biographies of Francis, the writings of Brother Leo and his companions, the authorized life by St Bonaventure, the *Fioretti*, and some of the surviving writings of Francis himself. In his *De immensa Dei misericordia* (1524) Erasmus tells a story concerning Socrates (LB V 566A): when a physiognomist, looking him over, told him he was a drunkard, glutton, lecher, and worse,

Socrates replied meekly that he would have been all of these and more, had not philosophy saved him from such vices. This comes from Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 4.37.80 or *De fato* 5.10; Erasmus uses it again in *Apophthegmata* (1531) LB IV 163D. The anecdote corresponds to lines 25–31 here and Erasmus seems deliberately to have declined an opportunity to compare the virtuous pagan with the Christian saint. In *De immensa misericordia*, however (LB V 566B), Erasmus remarks: 'But what Socrates ascribed to philosophy the excellent Francis more properly attributed to the mercy of God.' Erasmus' veneration of Socrates is sufficiently prominent elsewhere (see 'The Godly Feast' 194:1–7, 23–34).

- 33 Cornelius the centurion (Acts 10) is not officially a saint, but according to tradition he became a bishop, either of Caesarea or of Scepsis in Mysia (*The Catholic Encyclopedia* IV [New York 1913] sv 'Cornelius'). A more likely candidate here is Pope St Cornelius, who is believed to have been a martyr after two years as pope (251–3). He was strongly supported by St Cyprian in controversies, as Erasmus knew (Allen Ep 1000:188–91 / CWE Ep 1000:195–9).
- 34 Of Egypt, on whom see 'The Well-to-Do Beggars' n43.
- 35 Who was imprisoned and finally beheaded
- 36 Rabelais may have had this passage in mind when he has Grangousier, in *Gargantua* 1.45, denounce the belief that saints inflict diseases (Raymond Lebègue 'Rabelais, the Last of the French Erasmians' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12 [1949] 94). Cf 'A Pilgrimage' 628:3–10 above.
- 37 1 Cor 2:6–8
- 38 The 'most secret mysteries' of 1005:8 above. One day when Francis was anxious about the future of his order, an angel revealed to him the seven 'secrets' or privileges God vouchsafed to the Franciscans. These are divulged by Theotimus.
- 39 Greek in the original, but 'thrice-sacred' is not a New Testament word, as 'revelation' ('apocalypse') is.
- 40 The first revelation is the divine promise that the seraphic flock will flourish. This assurance is not restricted to a single passage or found in exactly the words spoken by Theotimus, but it can be elicited from passages in the 'Second Consideration on the Stigmata' and the *Speculum perfectionis* (*Mirror of Perfection*) 71, where the Lord tells Francis: 'See that your Order remains in the state in which it was founded, for nothing but this will remain to Me in the whole world . . . And when the world loses its faith, no light will remain save that of your Order, because I have set it as a light to the world' (Leo Sherley-Price *St Francis of Assisi: His Life and Writings as Recorded by his Contemporaries* [London 1959] 89–90; repr in Habig [n15 above] 1201–2).
- 41 4 October
- 42 The second revelation refers to the Indulgence of the Portiuncula, granted, according to tradition, by Pope Honorius III. It provided that whoever, after due confession of sins, visited the little chapel known as Portiuncula, close to Assisi, would gain the indulgence. The origins of the privilege are disputed; for a good summary see NCE XI 601–2. On claims for the extraordinary indulgence of the Portiuncula see also H.C. Lea *A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church* 3 vols (Philadelphia 1896) III 236–53, 341.

- On purgatory and indulgences see 'Rash Vows' n20; 'Military Affairs' nn24–6; 'A Pilgrimage' n93. In *Collectio judiciorum de novis erroribus* . . . ed C. du Plessis d'Argentré, 3 vols (Paris 1728–36; repr Brussels 1966) 1 part 2 318–9 under the year 1486 is *Qualificationes errorum fratris Johannes Mercatoris*, a Franciscan condemned for errors or heresies in his public preaching in Besançon. Most of his errors concerned the stigmata, but one was his assertion that Francis went to purgatory and delivered the souls of Franciscans and that persons friendly to the friars (see n55 below) could be buried in Franciscan garb.
- 43 Francis says in his *Testamentum* that 'the Most High himself' revealed to him that he must live the life of the gospel, and consequently he wrote a Rule for his followers (see *Opuscula S. Francisci et scripta S. Clarae Assisiensium* ed and trans [Italian] Giovanni Boccali and Luciano Canonici [Assisi 1978] 148–50; Habig [n15 above] 68). This means the primitive Rule (1209), no longer extant; 'written twice' refers to the surviving Rules of 1221 and 1223.
- 44 See Matt 13:24–30 on the wheat and tares. The divine promise is in 'The Second Consideration on the Stigmata.'
- 45 Also in 'The Second Consideration on the Stigmata'
- 46 On this theme as it applies to religious, cf *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1021B–1025F, which in eloquence and severity is equal to the earlier criticism in Allen Ep 447:410–742 / CWE Ep 447:448–819.
- 47 On the habit described see 'The Sermon' n14; here it is 'too dark' figuratively as well as literally. Francis' cord of hemp was coarse and a darker colour.
- 48 The biblical allusions are to parables of Christ's coming; see Matt 25:11–13 and Luke 13:22–7; Matt 22:1–14.
- 49 Fifth revelation, in 'The Second Consideration on the Stigmata.' Another entry in the *Qualificationes* cited in n42 above deals with the assumption that Francis had a divine promise that friars who did not keep the Rule could not remain long in the order or in this world; also that if anyone spoke evil of the friars he would be punished severely in this world and the next. In his lifetime Francis revealed this only to Brother Leo, his closest friend and confessor. In exceptional circumstances Francis was reputed to be a stern disciplinarian. A learned friar founded a house of studies in Bologna. To Francis this was shockingly subversive, contrary to the holy purposes of the order, whose members were to spend their time in prayer and preaching, not study. Believing that the friar's thoughts were destructive in intent, Francis cursed him, and afterwards that friar died a horrible death. See *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* Additional chapters 12 (Habig [n15 above] 1492–3).
- 50 Matthäus Schiner (1470–1522), bishop of Sion (Sitten) in south-western Switzerland (1499) and later of Novara, west of Milan, and cardinal from 1511, was active as a diplomat in the service of the emperor and sometimes of the pope. Erasmus dedicated his *Paraphrases on the Epistles of James and John* to him (1520, 1521). Schiner was a member of two commissions that investigated the Dominican case at Bern, described in the next note. Whether Theotimus is correct in saying that condemnation of those Dominicans was due principally to the cardinal's efforts is uncertain but could be true.
- 51 A sensational event at Bern in May 1509, long remembered in western Europe. In a grotesque climax to a series of pious frauds intended to gain an advantage over the Franciscans in the prolonged dispute over the Immaculate Conception

Von den vier ketzeren Prediger
ordens der obseruantz zü Bern
im Schwytzer land verbrant / in dē jar noch
Chriſti geburt .M.CCCC.ix. vff dē nechſte
donderſtag noch pfingſten.

Mit vil ſchöne figürlin vñ lieblichen
reymſprüchen neuwlich geteüſcht



Wer ſich des nimpt in übels an
Dz ich die ſach beſchuben han
Der ſchaff dz ſolichs nym geſchee
So ſchweig ich das an anders me.

The burning of the four Dominicans near Bern, 31 May 1509
From the title-page of Thomas Murner's *De quattuor heresiarchis ordinis
Praedicatorum de Observantia nuncupatorum apud Suitenses in civitate Bernensi
combustis Anno Christi MDIX* (Strasbourg 1509)
Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania

of the Virgin Mary, and secondly to win prestige for their own order and monastery, four Dominican friars, including the prior, were seized, tried, tortured, and after confessing guilt were handed over to the secular power and burned. Erasmus has a very brief but significant allusion to this affair in a letter of October 1519 addressed to a leading prelate, Albert of Brandenburg, cardinal-archbishop of Mainz: significant because it cites the fate of the friars in Bern and of Savonarola, another Dominican who was burned (at Florence in 1488), as evidence of the villainy the order was capable of (Allen Ep 1033:247–52 / CWE Ep 1033:271–6). Another brief allusion occurs in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1103:24.

The Immaculate Conception of Mary is the doctrine that from the instant of her conception Mary, by divine grace and in consideration of the merits of Christ, was free from all stain of original sin. Support for this belief, its advocates argued, could be found in patristic theology or deduced therefrom. The doctrine did not command much public attention until the Middle Ages, when the cult of Mary became popular. From the thirteenth century on, the Immaculate Conception was a topic of theological inquiry and controversy. Men as eminent as Bernard of Clairvaux, Bonaventure, Peter Lombard, and Thomas Aquinas rejected the doctrine, but Franciscans (except Bonaventure) zealously defended it. Their greatest philosopher, Duns Scotus, argued for it. In the end, Franciscan arguments and propaganda triumphed. Dominicans opposed the doctrine as long as they dared, but gradually popes and councils came to accept it, although official promulgation of it as a dogma binding upon all the faithful was never issued until 1854 (*Ineffabilis Deus*; text in Denzinger-Schönmetzer *Enchiridion* 561 nos 2803–4).

On Erasmus' attitude towards the Immaculate Conception of Mary consult J.-P. Massaut 'La question de l'Immaculée Conception' in *Critique et tradition à la veille de la Réforme en France* (Paris 1974) 37–45 and L.-E. Halkin 'La Mariologie d'Erasmus' ARG 68 (1977) 39–43. Although recognizing fully the difficulties of the question, and impressed as he was by Thomas Aquinas' arguments against it, Erasmus inclined to favour it; he thought it 'more likely to be right' (Allen Ep 1196:58–9 / CWE Ep 1196:66–7 and *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1163E). But he was cautious, exercising his right to go no further in a matter not yet enunciated authoritatively by the church. 'It is irreverent to take away praises from the Virgin, who is never sufficiently praised; but it is most dangerous by far to make any creature equal to Christ' (*Supputatio* LB IX 570B). For arguments that the four friars were innocent see N. Paulus *Ein Justizmord an vier Dominikaner begangen* (Frankfurt 1897); R. Steck *Der Berner Jetzerprozess (1507–1509) in neuer Beleuchtung in Schweizerischer Theologischer Zeitschrift* (1901) and separately (Bern 1902); Georg Schuhmann *Die Berner Jetzertragödie im Lichte der neuern Forschung und Kritik* (Freiburg im Breisgau 1912). For a judicious appraisal of essential questions see R. Reuss 'Le procès des Dominicains de Berne en 1507–1509' *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 52 (1905) 237–59. Kurt Guggisberg *Bernische Kirchengeschichte* (Bern 1958) 35–40 has a brief review of the case.

- 52 A popular and energetic writer and worker for the peace of the church during the 'Babylonian Captivity,' appropriately named here because she was a tertiary (member of the Third Order of Dominicans). On her canonization in 1461 see 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin' n43.

- 53 Not of the entire order but probably the provincials of southern Germany and Switzerland
- 54 Ps 105:15 (104:15 Vulg), a favourite clerical quotation
- 55 These and other persons 'well disposed' (1006:12 above) would certainly include those who left legacies to the order. Critics of mendicants often accused them of pestering or beguiling the well-to-do to leave money to them. See Allen Ep 2700:73–92 and 'The Funeral' 771:28–772:25, with the notes. This assurance given in 'The Second Consideration on the Stigmata' helps to explain the custom of burial in a friar's garb.
- 56 As an example of the perversity of human judgments, Erasmus writes in 1524, a Franciscan who exchanges his grey robe for a black one would fear that a devil would seize him and carry him off to hell, yet might not be afraid to commit adultery or some worse sin. Such people think that violating human ordinances is worse than breaking God's commandments (Allen Ep 1469:185–92 / CWE Ep 1469:195–201). This is a major theme in 'A Fish Diet'; see, on clerical dress, 705:3–32. See also *Lingua* LB IV 716B–717B / ASD IV-1A 122:165–124:217 / CWE 29 354–6.
- 57 Matt 25:36–46
- 58 Carmelites are said to have had a comparable tradition. The Virgin Mary appeared in a vision to St Simon Stock, head of the order (1147–65), and told him that whoever died in the Carmelite habit would not suffer hell-fire (Lea *Confession and Indulgences* [n42 above] 263, 266–70).
- 59 'The Third Consideration on the Stigmata' says that annually on the anniversary of Francis' death (evening of 3 October) the saint 'may go to Purgatory and by virtue of your Stigmata you may take from there and lead to Paradise all the souls of your Three Orders, that is, the Friars Minor, the Sisters, and the Continent, and also others who have been very devoted to you, whom you may find there.' 'The Fifth Consideration' says the same thing but does not mention 'others who have been very devoted to you.' See *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* trans Raphael Brown (Garden City, NY 1958) 192, and cf 211; repr Habig (n15 above) 1450, and cf 1469.
- 60 Cf Allen Ep 447:508–9 / CWE Ep 447:559–60. Intention indicates 'devotion' and therefore suffices.
- 61 The phrase 'gates of hell' is an echo of Matt 16:18.
- 62 *cacodaemones*; see 'The Repentant Girl' n7. The 'troops of black devils' attacking Eusebius' corpse are *agmina nigrorum daemonum*.
- 63 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 16.64; see 'Sympathy' n76.
- 64 This *reductio ad absurdum* recalls a passage in Erasmus' *Modus orandi Deum* (1524) where an example of vulgar adoption of religious idiom in non-religious context is 'bringing in St Francis' tunic' to try to rid a house of lice and fleas (LB V 1120E). The origin of such illustrations as this must be sought in early legends about Francis. He was almost fanatical in his love not only of birds but of all creatures great and small, including insects, and in his zeal for protecting them (see 1 Celano sections 80–2). 'I am a worm and no man,' he would say (Ps 22:6 [21:7 Vulg]), and would pick up worms and put them in a safe place lest they be trampled. Lice and fleas were all too familiar domestic companions of kings and commoners alike in the Europe of Francis and of Erasmus. See the stories about Louis XI of France in 'The Fabulous Feast' 580:10–27 and the remark in 'The Fish Diet' 715:21–3. In Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus*

- miraculorum* (c 1223) 4.48 we read of a knight who wanted to become a monk but recoiled at the lice-infested robes. Finally he steeled himself to enter the order and rejoiced ever afterwards, despite the lice.
- 65 *umbram*, the 'ghost' or 'spirit'; but 'soul' in the preceding line is *animam*.
- 66 Rom 1:28
- 67 Referring to Luther's emphasis on *sola fide*, a doctrine that to Erasmus was one of Luther's 'paradoxes' that he did not understand (Allen Ep 1384:5–14 / CWE Ep 1384:6–16, to Zwingli). He himself believed that although good works do not 'justify,' they are certainly essential and are characteristic of the true Christian. They are not sources but evidence, not causes but consequences of one's faith. But too often what are treated as 'works' are merely 'ceremonies' and outward forms ('The Godly Feast' 196:3–39). On these topics see Erasmus' commentary on Romans and Galatians in *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* (LB VI) and Paraphrases (LB VII and CWE 42). John B. Payne 'Erasmus: Interpreter of Romans' in *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies* ed Carl S. Meyer (St Louis 1971) 2–35 is a good guide.
- 68 Phileous] The first edition, September 1531, prints 'Philecoe' (ASD I-3 691:313). Several other early editions, including Froben's of March 1533 and the *Opera omnia* of 1540, have 'Philaetie' ('fault-finder'). LB has 'Philecoe.'
- 69 Erasmus is insistent on this point. Cf *Responsio adversus febricitantis libellum* (1529) LB X 1675A–B.
- 70 Such things as the habit, cord, and going barefoot soon became identified with Franciscans (on bare feet see n76 below), but made little difference to public or ecclesiastical opinion of the friars. Interpretation of their vow of poverty, on the other hand, did make a difference. What poverty meant to Francis was clear enough. What it ought to signify for others in his order was a troublesome legacy for many generations. See the 'Note on Franciscan Poverty' following n94, 1026–32 below.
- 71 Cornelius Agrippa says some 'haue a ludas to carrie theire purses, and giue them an accompt, in the meene while they presume to say, as Peter and Iohn did, we have no golde and siluer with vs' (*De vanitate* chapter 65 trans Sanford [1569] 106v / *Of the Vanitie and Vncertaintie of Artes and Sciences* ed Catherine M. Dunn [Northridge, CA 1974] 227). For Peter and John see Acts 3:4–6.
- 72 In *Moriae encomium* Folly mentions a friar who boasted that for sixty years he had never touched money without wearing two pairs of gloves (LB IV 473C / ASD IV-3 162:563–5 / CWE 27 132; Allen Ep 2700:70–2). Compare a long story in *Adagia* II v 98 (LB II 580F–583C / Phillips 'Adages' 361–8 / CWE 33 286–90). Conradus Pellicanus, a Franciscan for thirty-three years, says that he knew nothing about money, and had never touched it, until he left the order in 1526 (*Chronikon* ed B. Riggensbach [Basel 1877]). On Pellicanus see introductions to 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin' and 'The Well-to-Do Beggars'; H. Meylan 'Erasmus et Pellican' *Colloquium Erasmianum* (Mons 1968) 245–54.
- 73 Handkerchief or neckerchief, as in Allen Ep 2700:70–2
- 74 See 'The Funeral' 768:30–4, where mendicants are denounced by a secular priest for haunting rich men's houses and avoiding a laborious, austere life. But Erasmus allows that some religious are exceptionally devout and deserve as much praise as the others deserve blame. See for example *Ecclesiastes* 816C–817E.

- 75 *omnis literaturae rudens*. See 'The Sermon' n74.
- 76 The Rule of 1221 says nothing about footwear. The 1223 Rule says (chapter 2): 'Those who are forced by necessity may wear shoes [*calceamenta*]' (*Opuscula* ed Boccali and Canonici [n43 above] 124; Habig [n15 above] 59). The same passage paraphrases Matt 10:9–10 (cf Luke 5:4), which commands those who would follow Christ to 'provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat.' On shoes and sandals see Erasmus' note on Mark 6:9, where we are told that whether Christ wore shoes or sandals or went barefoot at times is unimportant. Nor should his injunctions about such matters be taken too literally. He did not come into the world to teach us how to be shod or how to dress (*Annotaciones in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 172E–173D). Francis wore sandals in the first year or two of his life as a hermit, but then, inspired to take the scriptural injunction (Matt 10:9–10) literally, he joyfully cast away staff, sandals, and purse, and dressed as he lived, with utmost simplicity (*Legend of the Three Companions* chapter 8). In paintings Francis is usually barefoot, as are some of his early followers. Later Franciscans commonly wore sandals. Erasmus is careful to record that in his dream of Francis the saint was barefoot (Allen Ep 2700:47–51; see n16 above). See also 'A Fish Diet' n211.
- 77 'You carry teeth but no money with you,' the innkeeper tells the two Observant Franciscans who ask for shelter 'The Well-to-do Beggars' 471:33. 'Francis . . . hated money above all else. He always urged his brethren both by word and example to avoid it as they would the devil' (*Speculum perfectionis* section 14 trans Sherley-Price in *St Francis of Assisi* [n40 above] 28; repr in Habig [n15 above] 1140).
- 78 1 Tim 6:10
- 79 Matt 5:34. On this theme see 'A Fish Diet' nn131, 132.
- 80 Cf Jer 9:21.
- 81 A licence from the pope to do something that ordinarily is not permitted by canon law, an exception (not to be confused with an indulgence). Francis required that his followers be humble, obedient, and seek no privileges. These precepts are both implicit and explicit in the Rule. In his final *Testament* he warns again that the friars are not to look for privileges (text in *Opuscula* ed Boccali and Canonici [n43 above] 146–56; translation in Habig [n15 above] 67–70). Nevertheless the use and abuse of privileges played a prominent role in the order's later history, as Philecos notes. Erasmus remarks elsewhere that the Franciscans ascribe higher authority to the pope than to Christ when their requests are granted; when they are denied, they reject the pope's authority (Allen Ep 447:545–52 / CWE Ep 447:600–9, Allen Ep 1875:150–4).
- 82 Philecos' scandalous gossip, dependent on hearsay, is made to seem the more credible by the assurances of the order's defender, Theotimus. The tale of the execution of two Franciscans by friars of the order was mentioned briefly by Erasmus also in a letter of 1516 to Lambertus Grunnius, not printed until 1529. The letter was part of a campaign, planned in London with Ammonio, to support his appeal to the papacy to be released from his earlier commitments as an Augustinian canon. In that letter, the present report was attributed to Matthäus Schiner of Mühlebach, cardinal-bishop of Sion, who had been

involved in the investigation into the case of the Dominican friars in Bern (see n50 above); see Allen Ep 447:600–2 / CWE Ep 447:664–6. In the same passage (Allen lines 596–600 / CWE lines 660–4) Schiner related how some Dominicans had buried a young man alive because his father was demanding the return of a son, taken by stealth.

The present story seems to be traceable to an episode told in much detail in the life of Blessed Thomas of Scarlino, also known as Thomas of Florence and Thomas Bellaci. He was a Franciscan lay brother (c 1370–1447) who, after a profligate youth, entered the Franciscans of the Observance at Fiesole c 1392. Although only a lay brother, he became master of novices, renowned for his piety and exemplary life, and he was an important personality to the Observant tradition where it was reported, *inter alia*, that after his death, John of Capistrano had to summon him to stop him working miracles, lest the canonization of Bernardine of Siena should be impaired.

The main source for Thomas' life is *La Franceschina: testo volgare Umbro del secolo xv scritto dal P. Giacomo Oddi di Perugia* ed P. Nicola Cavanna OFM (Florence 1931) I 215–49. In that account, there appears (234–6) the report of a pretended funeral held for two young novices as a test of their humility and obedience. It was also intended, however, to induce a spirit of remorse and renewed austerity amongst the brethren of the convent who witnessed the trial, and who in begging for mercy for the love of God for the novices, promised on their behalf to purify themselves entirely and lead a better and more spiritual life than in the past. What version of the story Erasmus heard cannot of course be confirmed. Both in this text and in the letter, Erasmus implies that such an act was approved by the pope, and in the letter to Grunnius such tolerance is contrasted with the ostracism suffered by a man seeking to give up his religious habit, as Erasmus sought to do.

The editor wishes to acknowledge the important assistance of Servus Gieben OFM Cap of the Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, Rome, in tracing the history of this episode.

83 See n76 above.

84 'By synecdoche,' as Theotimus puts it. See *De copia* 23 CWE 24 341:1–24.

85 Matt 5:44–5, 48

86 See 'The Sermon' n93.

87 This echo of Matt 25:40 ('Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me') testifies to Theotimus' naïve but insuperable confusion of mendicant and evangelical charity.

88 Acts 14:19; 17:22–3; 2 Cor 11:25

89 Quoted by Paul in Acts 20:35

90 2 Cor 11:7

91 See Allen Ep 2700:109–14.

92 Ie the virtues proclaimed in the sermon on the Mount; see 1012:11–17 above

93 *Adagia* II i 21

94 Matt 9:20–2; Mark 5:25–34; Luke 8:43–8

NOTE ON FRANCISCAN POVERTY

Francis meant exactly what he said in the Rule about poverty and avoiding money and property, but how to reconcile his uncompromising requirements with the conditions of life, the growth of the order, and its governance taxed

the ingenuity of his sympathizers, successors, and their critics. The Rule of 1221 stipulated that friars must not receive (*recipiant*) money or cause it to be received through an intermediary (chapters 2 and 8; the Rule of 1223 says the same, but more briefly, in chapter 4). But is *recipere* ('to receive') the same as *attingere*, *contingere*, *tangere* ('to touch'), verbs that also occur in the discussion of poverty in this colloquy? 'Whence this new interpretation, that not to receive it means not to touch it?' Phileous asks (1009:40–1). 'Pope Benedict so interpreted,' he is told. The rejoinder to this answer, 'But as a Franciscan, not as pope,' is puzzling. It may be a slip on Erasmus' part or perhaps simply a way of showing that Theotimus, the credulous admirer of the order, is not so well informed as he imagines. Neither Benedict XI (1303–4), Benedict XII (1334–42), nor Benedict XIII (1394–1417, one of the 'Clementine' antipopes at Avignon during the Great Schism of 1378–1417), was a Franciscan. All of these popes were involved in matters that affected Franciscan privileges, but none of them made important rulings in the controversies over the doctrine of poverty. The person meant here is far more likely to be Bonaventure, minister-general of the Franciscan order (1257–74) and author of the classic treatise *Apologia pauperum* (1269) on the question of the absolute poverty of Christ and the apostles and of Franciscans.

Debates on poverty, which divided Franciscans into factions and called forth many writings over many generations, demanded the attention of popes and councils. They continued so long, and were so difficult a sequel to Francis' simple and devout efforts to give up everything to follow the injunctions of Christ, as he understood these, that a brief review of decisive events should be helpful. The number of documents, histories, and studies of this and related topics is daunting, but the subject was so important and so long argued that some titles must be cited. The best single-volume history of the Franciscan order in English is John Moorman's (Oxford 1968), with excellent bibliographies. On the controversies over poverty consult also M.D. Lambert *Franciscan Poverty* (London 1961); Gordon Leff *Heresy in the Later Middle Ages* 2 vols (Manchester and New York 1967) I 51–166 and passim; Lydia von Auw *Angelo Clareno et les spirituels italiens Uomini e dottrine* 25 (Rome 1979); David Burr *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: The Origins of the 'usus pauper' Controversy* (Philadelphia 1989); Decima Douie *The Nature and the Effect of the Heresy of the Fraticelli* (Manchester 1932).

Francis' words on money and poverty in the two Rules were intended not as mere exhortations but as injunctions. 'We who left everything behind must take care not to lose the kingdom of heaven for a trifle' (Rule of 1221 chapter 8). His own example and sense of urgency about rejecting money and property could persuade his earliest followers to practise what he preached. But the rapid growth of the order, after Pope Honorius III confirmed the 1223 Rule, soon began to show that the hard rules on poverty and rejection of money were less practicable than they had been for the first brethren. (The Rules of 1221 and 1223 are translated in Leo Sherley-Price *St Francis of Assisi* [n40 above] 205–26, 228–34; also in Habig [n15 above] 31–53, 54–64.) Even holy friars could not depend solely on alms when their numbers equalled, and then exceeded, the five thousand who, as the Gospels relate, had been fed miraculously with five loaves and two fish (Matt 14:15–21; Mark 6:31–42; Luke 9:12–17; John 6:3–13). As early as 1221, Francis perceived clearly but helplessly that he was losing

control of his order. His successors, John Parenti and then Brother Elias, had to deal with problems that Francis himself neither could nor would address. Poverty was only one of these. Another was whether the order should support learning and provide university training for priests, a question tentatively settled during the lifetime of St Francis and definitively by 1230. A third difficulty was relations between regulars and secular clergy. Some bishops and monks wanted to suppress all mendicant orders at the Second Council of Lyon (1274), but the pope would not allow such a radical move and specifically exempted the Friars Minor and the Dominicans (the Friars Preachers) from discussion of the future of the mendicants.

For many reasons the question of Franciscan poverty took longer to resolve. In the Rule of 1223, still today the governing constitution of the Order of Friars Minor, in the interim version of 1221, and in his *Testament* (1226), the founder's intentions were, he believed, clear and emphatic as regards the doctrine of absolute poverty and adherence to the Rule. Nevertheless constitutions seeking to bind the future to the past may require interpretation, or reinterpretation, if they are not to become dead letters. Provisions of the Rule concerning poverty were watered down or amended from time to time both by Franciscan and papal decisions, for the greater good and welfare of the order, as the proponents of change argued.

Francis died in 1226. Even before that date differences arose between friars who believed in strict poverty, manual work, and begging for food, and those who, in spite of Francis' directions and example, wanted a more conventional religious life. Pope Gregory IX, a personal friend of Francis, at the request of general chapter decided that some definitive rulings must be made on how the Rule's strictures on poverty were to be understood and followed. Gregory's bull *Quo elongati* (1230) was the first in a series of papal decisions and influential writings analysing, interpreting, and adjudicating the Rule and its pronouncements on poverty. *Quo elongati* examined the concept of the use of things (*usus rerum*), whether money or other goods, without possession or ownership of them. The pope, or a cardinal designated by him, Gregory suggested, could be the legal owner. Such distinction between use and possession was presented as a rational solution, a sensible method of furnishing food, shelter, clothing, and other necessities to the friars without their violating the Rule by actually possessing money. The bull held that Francis' *Testament* did not bind his successors; only the Rule was binding. But even that could not bind unless popes, not Francis, had authority, as Gregory showed by using his bull to interpret the Rule (text of *Quo elongati* in Luke Wadding *Annales minorum* 8 vols [Lyon 1625–54; 3rd edition, 28 vols Quaracchi 1931–41] II 275–8). See Moorman 89–91.

Bonaventure, minister-general from 1257 until 1274, is sometimes called the second founder of the Franciscan order. His *Apologia pauperum* (1269) upheld the doctrine of Christ's absolute poverty and stressed its spiritual value for devout Christians who sought to emulate Christ. On that point, he argues, the Rule is entirely correct. True, an aspiration to emulate Christ perfectly with respect to poverty is impossible, since doing so would demand perfect charity, and Christ alone had perfect charity. Yet striving to do as much as possible towards that end is laudable and, for the sincere friar, necessary. As

for the compatibility of the doctrine of absolute poverty with the use of things, Bonaventure accepted the distinctions between use and possession made in *Quo elongati* but emphasized strict use, not mere use, for he insists on austerity. (On Bonaventure consult Leff 1 83–100, where the Latin texts of Bonaventure's definitions are added; and Lambert 126–48.)

Bonaventure's *Apologia pauperum* supplied the foundation of the bull by Nicholas III, *Exiit qui seminat* (1279), which stressed the ideal of evangelical poverty in the Rule, especially its prescriptions on poverty as the authentic teaching of Christ. This bull was mainly a reworking of *Quo elongati* but with important refinements from *Apologia pauperum*. Its importance was that it confirmed Franciscan poverty by papal ruling. In addition it forbade any reopening henceforth of the question of the absolute poverty of Christ (see text in Leff 1 97 n3). *Exiit* did, however, make distinctions between 'use of right' (*usus iuris*) and 'use in fact' (*usus facti*). The Rule permitted 'use in fact' but not 'use of right.' But even 'use in fact' must be interpreted as requiring strict austerity. For *Exiit qui seminat* see *Bullarium Franciscanum* ed J.H. Sbaralea 7 vols (Rome 1759–1904; facs repr 1983–) III 404–16; Moorman 179–81; and the analysis by Lambert 141–8.

Meanwhile small groups of dissident Franciscans in Italy and Provence, dedicated to rigorous observance of the founder's precepts, were protesting what they perceived as betrayal of the Franciscan ideals. These dissidents were the Zelanti or Spirituals. Opposed to them were friars who were willing to accept change, believing strongly in keeping the order together and promoting the gospel by teaching, learning, and foreign missions as well as by a holy life. These were the predecessors of the Conventuals, a term first used in a papal document of 1432. For them obedience was the test of piety in the order. To the order the Spirituals were schismatics, some even heretics, for by denying the now official distinction between use and ownership they were, in effect, denying the authority of the pope – and that meant courting trouble. The Spirituals had able spokesmen, and their adherents were willing to risk persecution for a cause they considered sacred. They won sympathy from some popes, reluctant but firm opposition from others, since the papacy could not permit dissidence to become outright contumacy. At a general chapter of the Franciscan order in 1292, Peter Olivi, a learned theologian and leader of the Spirituals, made no objection to the distinction between use and possession but demanded personal dedication and the practice of austerity (*usus pauper*). Like Bonaventure, Olivi made austerity the *sine qua non*, the integral test of a friar's faithfulness to his vows to follow the path of evangelical perfection (see Lambert 149–61). Olivi and other Spirituals criticized the papacy severely for what they regarded as interference with the pure doctrine of poverty. The orthodoxy of some of Olivi's theological writings was called into question, but he survived and was a hero to fellow Spirituals (Leff 1 100–39). In 1294 Pope Celestine V, who sympathized with the Spirituals, allowed some of them to leave the Order of Friars Minor and form a new order, the Poor Hermits of Pope Celestine. But this pope reigned only a few months. His successor, Boniface VIII, was a formidable pontiff with stern views on the need for strict discipline and for obedience to papal decrees. He got rid of the minister-general, Raymond

Gaufridi, and appointed one who had no sympathy with the Spirituals. Olivi died in 1298, but other Spirituals continued his teachings. At last continued agitation by Spirituals and persecution of them compelled Pope Clement v to make an elaborate official inquiry (1309) into the differences between Spirituals and the order, but this action did little to improve matters.

The Council of Vienne (1311–12), also in the pontificate of Clement v, clarified existing rules about friars' privileges and relations with secular clergy. From this council came a long constitution *Exivi de paradiso* (1312) on the Franciscan Rule (text in Wadding *Annales minorum* vi 227–37; text and translation in Tanner i 392–401). The document is difficult because it labours to placate both Spirituals and the community by finding good things to say about both, but in the main it supports the community more than the Spirituals were prepared to accept. It agrees with *Quo elongati* on the authority of the Rule: 'Wishing, then, to give peace to the friars' consciences and to put an end to these disputes, we declare that the Friars Minor in professing their rule are obliged specially to the strict and restrained use expressed in the rule. To say, however, as some are said to assert, that it is heretical to hold that a restricted use of things is or is not included in the vow of evangelical poverty, this we judge to be presumptuous and rash' (Tanner i 400). That is, while Franciscans are bound by vow to poverty, as to obedience and chastity, they are not bound to more than is expressed in the Rule. This even-handedness in the decree did not satisfy the Spirituals, who remained unreconciled.

After John xxii (1316–34) became pope, both he and the minister-general tried to settle the long-standing quarrel by forcing the order to abandon relaxations of the Rule and the Spirituals their obstinate independence. Accordingly the pope issued a series of bulls. In *Quorundam exigit* (1317), he accepted the fact that Franciscans now kept large stores of goods (such as oil and bread) and were no longer forced to beg for their day-to-day sustenance. At the same time John exalted the virtue of obedience (Wadding *Annales minorum* vi 308–13). A few friars resisted the bull; four who held out were declared heretical for defying the authority of the church, refused to recant, were handed over to the secular power, and burned (Marseilles 1318). Another bull, *Sancta Romana* (also 1317), denounced a group of Franciscan rebels, the Fraticelli, who refused to obey papal commands (Moorman 311–12). Some left the order; a few joined other orders; but worse was to come.

Spirituals believed and taught that by living without possessions, Christ set the pattern for all who would preach the gospel. Nicholas iii had endorsed this interpretation in the preamble to *Exiit qui seminat* (1279), as the Spirituals often reminded their critics. They unwisely challenged the pope on the issue by declaring in their chapter that it was not heretical but Catholic teaching to say that Christ and the apostles did not own anything. John xxii was not a man to defy. He collected opinions from theologians on the question; respondents differed as to the Spirituals but upheld the absolute poverty of Christ. The time for decisive action had come. In *Quia nonnunquam* (1322) John asserted the legality of a pope's changing the decrees of his predecessors (Wadding *Annales minorum* vi 446–7; Moorman 315–16). In *Ad conditorem canonum* (1322) he rejected 'use' without possession; who owns the piece of cheese a friar

eats? They are owners of what they have, in spite of their notions about the absolute poverty of Christ (Moorman 316–17; Lambert 230–5). Moreover the pope ruled that things (except church buildings) given to friars were no longer the property of the church as legal ‘owner’ (as provided in *Quo elongati*). Thus with this bull John xxii ‘effectively destroyed Franciscan poverty’ (Leff 1 165) and made the Friars Minor like any other religious order.

Then came John’s *Cum inter nonnullos* (1323), a bull very brief but devastating to Spirituals, for it declared the doctrine of the absolute poverty of Christ and his apostles ‘erroneous and heretical’ (text in Wadding *Annales minorum* vii 3 and Denzinger-Schönmetzer 228–9 nos 930–1; translation in Lambert 235–6). Christ and his apostles, the bull affirms, although they may have had few possessions, had some. John dismisses the legalistic arguments (as found in *Exiit qui seminat*) based on distinction between *usus iuris* and *usus facti*. To assert or imply that Christ and his apostles did not have a right to use things that Scripture says they possessed contradicts Scripture and Catholic doctrine. This bull, in which one pope (John xxii) dismissed as heretical what another (Nicholas iii) had declared true, came as a shock to the Spirituals, for it gave an immediate and alarming signal to those who might presume to preach a doctrine of Christ’s absolute poverty. A sequel to this brief bull was a longer one, *Quia vir reprobus* (1329) in which John xxii returns to the topic of poverty in order to prove from Scripture at greater length that Christ and his apostles did have some property. Again the pope affirms that to maintain the contrary is heretical (Moorman 322; Lambert 242–3). For papal bulls on Franciscan topics consult Moorman’s note (601) on the *Bullarium Franciscanum*. Titles, incipits, and dates of papal bulls important for Franciscan history, in Wadding and other collections, are listed in Moorman’s index 619–20.

The authority of *Cum inter nonnullos* settled the question of Franciscan poverty, though echoes of the debate were heard for many years (see ‘A Fish Diet’ 690:3–7). John xxii made many enemies in this quarrel, among whom the philosopher William of Ockham was one of the most vigorous and prolific. Differences between Spirituals and the larger community were leading to worrisome questions whether the Order of Friars Minor could put its affairs in order or would divide into two orders. Bands of dissidents had existed in Italy since the second decade of the century if not earlier. One of the smallest groups, living in the harshest austerity, included a devout man called Paul de’ Trinci. He and his companions kept strict observance of the Rule, attracted others to their ways, and won papal support from Gregory xi (1373), who permitted them to live separately from the rest of the Friars Minor while continuing under the authority of the minister-general. Once again the majority of friars were critical, but adherents of the new movement grew in numbers and influence. They were known henceforth as Observants. By 1415 they even had possession of the Portiuncula in Assisi, the sacred place of Franciscans, and they gradually won favour with popes and kings – not always, to be sure, and not without the risks and complexities of ecclesiastical and secular politics (Moorman 368–83). By the last decade of the fifteenth century Observants and Conventuals appear to have been nearly equal in numbers, though in different countries or regions one might have preponderance: Observants in Spain, for example, whereas in England, in the era of Erasmus, most Franciscans were

Conventuals. Like the monastic orders, the mendicants had the usual tensions with secular clergy.

The two branches of Franciscans lived in fraternal rivalry for nearly a century and a half. On this period of their history see Moorman chapters 35 and 37; and with particular reference to South Germany, P.L. Nyhus 'The Franciscans in South Germany, 1400–1590: Reform and Revolution' *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* new series 65 no 8 (1975) 1–47. A lingering hope that, even though separated, they might have a single general who would exercise ultimate administrative authority, under the pope, came to nothing. At long last Pope Leo x in 1517 divided all Franciscans into two orders: Observants and the various communities of reformed friars (*reformati*) would constitute one order, the Friars Minor; all Conventuals would constitute a separate order, the Friars Minor Conventual. Each order would elect its own head, the Friars Minor a minister-general, the Conventuals a master-general. In all processions and ceremonies Observants would have precedence over Conventuals. Thereafter the Observants gradually became the dominant order of Franciscans. A few years before 'The Sermon' and 'The Seraphic Funeral' were printed, another group of Observants wrote a set of constitutions, received papal sanction, and soon became a large and active component of the Franciscan family. These were the Capuchins, the third independent group (Friars Minor Capuchin), but they were too new to receive attention from Erasmus. In his writings we read, as in these two colloquies, of Observants and Conventuals. The name 'Observants' was finally abrogated by papal decree in 1897.

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SYMPATHY

Amicitia

First printed in the September 1531 edition.

This is the first of two dialogues on nature in the September 1531 edition. 'Sympathy' deals with natural history, 'A Problem' with what used to be called natural philosophy. Many pages in the *Colloquies* and many passages in other writings by Erasmus testify to his lifelong interest in such topics, an interest reflecting literary and rhetorical inclinations as much as 'scientific' curiosity. His knowledge of nature came both from books and from observation, but mainly from books. Erwin Panofsky was correct in noting that 'Erasmus' response to art, like that of all Northern humanists, was literary rather than visual' ('"Nebulae in pariete": Notes on Erasmus' Eulogy on Dürer' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 14 [1951] 37), and it is equally true that his response to nature was often literary rather than visual. A fundamental postulate of his conception of history, whether of nature or any other subject, was that to understand it one should go first, and repeatedly, to ancient authors. Almost everything worth knowing, he wrote in 1514, has been set forth in Greek and Latin (*De ratione studii* LB I 521B, 522A / ASD I-2 114:2-4, 116:12-14 / CWE 23 667:2-4, 669:25-6). In assessing Erasmus' life work, achievements, and fame we must accept these convictions as fundamental. To affirm that nearly everything worth knowing has been said in Greek and Latin would have been a reckless utterance at the end of the century, but in 1514 the claim was defensible. Moreover, in the context of education, where the claim is made, it was accepted as sound long after the sixteenth century. Still, not everything in 'Sympathy' comes from books. Erasmus does not allow the dialogue to become a mere lecture. Instead he enlivens it by anecdotes from his experiences in Italy and England. Such tactics were elementary rhetorical practice, but effective in this as in most Erasmian dialogues.

Throughout the world of nature and its wondrous variety of flora, fauna, insects, birds, and fish, patterns of what the Greeks term sympathy and antipathy – connatural affinities and hostilities – are discernible to observers. They were well known to ancient naturalists and treated as worthy of notice, mysterious though they were. Aristotle, Theophrastus (his successor as head of the Lyceum), the Elder Pliny, and Dioscorides mention many examples, as do other authors. They offer some ingenious explanations of sympathies and antipathies, usually on anthropocentric assumptions, or simply resort to metaphors. For a few examples see Pliny *Naturalis historia*

10.203–8, 19.156, 20.21–2, 24.1–2, 32.1–4, 37.59; Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9:1; Cicero *De natura deorum* 2.47–52. Some of this lore was proverbial, some preserved in poetry or legend. Aristotle and Theophrastus in Greek and Latin were available in printed books before the end of the fifteenth century; Pliny as early as 1469.

Erasmus in his colloquy borrows also from Plutarch *Moralia*, Aelian *De natura animalium*, and Oppian *Halieutica*. Of all the writers named, Aristotle and Theophrastus were in a class by themselves. They were skilled investigators and classifiers, not merely compilers. (Linnaeus and Cuvier were ‘schoolboys to old Aristotle,’ Charles Darwin wrote after reading one of Aristotle’s zoological works in his old age; see *Life and Letters* ed Francis Darwin [New York 1887] 427.) The *Materia medica* of Dioscorides (first century AD) was for centuries invaluable as an illustrated herbal and guide to pharmacology, on which medieval medicine was based. Pliny was a historian of sorts, a compiler of everything he could learn, in a lifetime of incessant labour, about the natural world and its creatures. Like Dioscorides, he produced a work that, despite errors, quaintness, and other faults, was none the less found useful by posterity. In the Middle Ages Dioscorides and Pliny were classics, authorities. Their books contain both fact and fancy, fables and folklore, but for many readers this simply made them more attractive. Erasmus had comparatively little to do with Dioscorides, except now and then in the *Adagia*, but was very familiar with Aristotle and Pliny, whom he read with pleasure and respect. Christian theology and teleology, with their moralizing of nature and fondness for allegorizing, expressed and emphasized wonder. The spectacle of nature taught Augustine, Aquinas, Erasmus, and all thoughtful, devout Christians, when they contemplated nature, to turn their thoughts to the author of nature. ‘Sermons in stones’ was a meaningful trope; the book of nature a bounteous resource for the expositor of Sacred Scripture (see *Ecclesiastes* LB v 866A–867B).

The description of Eusebius’ house and garden at the beginning of ‘The Godly Feast,’ typical of its author and of sixteenth-century taste, demonstrates how natural history could be used for artistic embellishment and moral instruction. Later colloquies furnish additional examples of the application of science to literary and moral ends. That much of the science was derived from literary sources would not have diminished seriously its credibility or utility for Erasmus and his readers, for most of the accessible sources of information about the world of nature were discursive or descriptive ones. To painters, preachers, poets, and orators, natural history offered a treasury of materials for the purposes of pictorial and literary art. This is why so many of the parallels in *Parabolae* are bits of natural history from Aristotle and Pliny, accompanied by moral applications by Erasmus (see CWE 23 134, 219–77). It is

why we have a brilliant exhibition of what Erasmus' imagination, supported by his erudition, could do with a few lines of Pliny in the essay on the beetle and the eagle in *Adagia* III vii 1 (LB II 869A–883E). And it is why, in a lesson on *copia*, Erasmus tells the aspirant that he must memorize the qualities of a great many things found in natural science in order to make comparisons of them ('A Short Rule for Copiousness' 169:1–3; cf *De copia* LB I 79B / CWE 24 581). Unless a preacher or theologian is familiar with the properties of plants, animals, and gems, he will miss the deeper meanings of similes and allegories in the Bible, as Augustine warned long ago (*De doctrina christiana* 2.16.24 PL 34 47). Or what good are syllogisms in a disputation on the crocodile if you don't know what kind of tree or animal a crocodile is (*Ratio verae theologiae* LB V 80A–B / Holborn 186:3–5)? Finally, if Erasmus is right, knowledge of our own instinctive preferences and aversions, for instance hatred of lies and liars (1045:33–1046:7 below), should be taken into account in the choice of career or companions.

The genesis of 'Sympathy,' as of some other colloquies (among them 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin,' 'An Examination concerning the Faith,' 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake,' 'Charon,' 'The Sermon,' 'The Seraphic Funeral') can be established without difficulty. In 1525, Erasmus wrote a preface to a new edition of Pliny's *Naturalis historia* (Basel: Johann Froben). He praises it as 'a treasure house, a veritable encyclopaedia of all that is worth knowing' (Allen Ep 1544:32–3 / CWE Ep 1544:34–5). Like Plutarch, Pliny is an author every educated person ought to have read; he is at the head of the list of the best authors in *De ratione studii* (see LB I 523B / ASD I-2 120 / CWE 24 673:1–2; on Erasmus' estimate of the ancients see CWE 23 xlviii–xlix). In 'Sympathy' the main speaker, Ephorinus, tells his friend John many curious facts about sympathy and antipathy in nature. Anselmus Ephorinus, a young scholar educated at Cracow, an admirer of Erasmus who had himself made an edition of Pliny (1530), visited Erasmus in Freiburg for five months, April–September 1531, bringing with him a youth named Jan Boner, whom he was tutoring, and another youth. It was a long but cordial visit. No doubt Pliny and his book were discussed during that summer. What is certain is that one of the new colloquies ready for the September 1531 edition, 'Sympathy,' had Ephorinus and Boner as interlocutors. On Ephorinus and Boner see CEBR and Allen Epp 2539, 2533.

On the history of natural history consult Thorndike *Magic and Experimental Science* and A.C. Crombie *Medieval and Early Modern Science* 2 vols, rev ed (Garden City, NY 1959). *The Development of Natural History in Tudor England* by F.D. and J.F.M. Hoeniger (Folger Shakespeare Library 1969) is recommended as a supplementary study, and C.S. Lewis *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge 1964) as an essay on the medieval world-view. J.-C. Margolin's helpful essay on 'L'idée de nature dans la pensée d'Erasme' is in his *Recherches*

érasmiennes 9–44. See Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 42–50 on Erasmus and the language of nature, and for some additional material on Pliny, ‘A Pilgrimage for Religion’s Sake’ n109. Filippo Picinelli’s vast *Mundus symbolicus* shows how complex and detailed the lore of nature was when interpreted by the evidences of classical, literary, emblematic, religious, and ‘scientific’ experience.

EPHORINUS, JOHN

Ephorinus Often I fall to wondering what deity Nature consulted when she mingled certain mysterious sympathies and antipathies in everything under the sun – improbable ones by any known causes, except that apparently she enjoyed this spectacle,¹ just as we find entertainment by setting cocks among quail.²

John I’m not yet clear about your meaning.

Ephorinus Then if you want it put more plainly,³ I’ll tell you. You know snakes are a species hostile to man.

John I know that between them and us there is ancient, irreconcilable enmity – and will be as long as we remember that ill-omened apple.⁴

Ephorinus You know the lizard.

John Of course.

Ephorinus Italy has big green ones.⁵ This animal is by nature both friendly to man and unfriendly to snakes.

John What’s the evidence?

Ephorinus Wherever a man looks, there are lizards gathered, heads tilted, gazing intently at him. If you spit, they lick up the spittle dropped from your mouth;⁶ I’ve seen them drink boys’ urine, too.⁷ Yes, and boys handle and even hurt them without harm to themselves; and when held up to your mouth they’re fond of licking the saliva. But if set against one another when captured, it’s wonderful how fiercely they fight among themselves, ignoring the person who set them to fighting. If someone in the fields walks by a hollow, they get his attention by their rustling in the bramble bushes here and there. A person unfamiliar with this custom would suspect a snake; when you look closely, there are the lizards, gazing at you with heads cocked until you stand still; if you walk on, they follow. Also they bring themselves to a man’s attention when he’s busy with something else. You’d say they’re having fun and are extremely delighted by the sight of a man.⁸

John A marvellous tale!

Ephorinus One day I saw a quite large and brilliantly green lizard fighting with a snake in the mouth of a cave. At first we wondered what was the

matter, for the snake was not easily visible.⁹ An Italian warned us that the enemy was in the cave. Soon afterwards the lizard came up to us, as though displaying his wounds and appealing for aid. He would almost allow himself to be touched, but whenever we stood still he too stood still, watching us. The snake had gnawed almost all of one side, making the green one red.¹⁰

John Had I been there, I'd have wanted to avenge the lizard.

Ephorinus But the enemy¹¹ had already withdrawn to the inner part of the cave. Some days later, however, we feasted our eyes with revenge.

10 **John** Glad you did. But how?

Ephorinus We happened to be walking by the same place. The snake had drunk at a spring nearby, as the heat was intense – so much so that we too were desperate with thirst. At that very moment a boy from the fields came by, a lad of thirteen, son of the household in which we were staying (because of the plague scare in Bologna).¹² He was carrying a rake, the kind farmers gather hay with, and as soon as he saw the snake he let out a yell.

John From fear, perhaps.

Ephorinus Not at all – from joy, as if exulting over a captured foe. He hits the snake with the rake; it coils; the boy keeps on hitting until the snake, head crushed, stretches his length. Now this they don't do unless they're dying. Hence the fable you've often heard about the crab who kills his lodger the snake: when he sees the snake stretched out full length, he says, 'That's how you should have gone when alive.'¹³

John Well done! What next?

25 **Ephorinus** The boy picked up the snake with his rake and hung it from a bush above the cave. Several days later we saw the branches there stained with gore.

Countrymen in those parts told us for a fact something else that was astonishing. Farmers sometimes take a nap in the field when they're tired, and they keep by them a jug of milk they use both for food and drink. Snakes are extremely fond of milk. So it happens not infrequently that they glide into the jug. For this mischief the farmers have a ready remedy.

John What, if you please?

35 **Ephorinus** They smear the rim of the jug with garlic, the smell of which frightens the snakes away.

John Then what did Horace mean when he wrote that garlic was a poison more harmful than hemlock,¹⁴ since (as you say) it's a remedy against poisons?¹⁵

40 **Ephorinus** But listen to what's harder to believe: sometimes they creep slyly into the open mouth of the sleeper and worm their way into his stomach.¹⁶

John Doesn't a man with such a lodger die presently?

Ephorinus No, he lives – most miserably, without any relief for his pain unless they feed the guest milk and other food a snake likes.

John Is there no remedy against such a misfortune?

Ephorinus Eating plenty of garlic.

5 **John** No wonder, then, if reapers love garlic.

Ephorinus And there's another remedy sometimes available to those exhausted by work and heat. In this danger it's not unusual for a lizard, tiny as he is, to save a man.

John How can he?

10 **Ephorinus** When he sees a snake lying in wait, he scampers over the man's face and neck and keeps doing this until he's awakened him by scratching and scraping his claws.¹⁷ Then the man who wakes up, when he sees the lizard nearby, soon realizes that an enemy lurks thereabouts, and he searches until he finds it.

15 **John** The marvellous power of nature!

Ephorinus Now no animal is more hostile to man than the crocodile, which often swallows men whole and resorts to cunning to further his malice. With the water he's drunk he makes slippery the paths down to the Nile; when men go down to draw water, he gobbles them up as they tumble in.¹⁸ And
20 you're aware that the dolphin,¹⁹ though born in a different element, is a lover of mankind.²⁰

John I've heard the famous story of the beloved boy,²¹ but a more famous one about Arion.²²

Ephorinus Yes, and fishermen hunting mullets use dolphins as their
25 'hounds.' After receiving a small share of the prey, the dolphins take their leave – indeed²³ they even submit to punishment if they've been remiss in their hunting. Often they appear to sailors at sea, leaping for joy and sporting on the crest of the waves, sometimes swimming up to the ship, sometimes leaping across the swelling sails.²⁴ So delighted is the dolphin by
30 the company of man. But as it is fond of man, likewise is it a mortal foe of the crocodile. The dolphin comes out of the sea and dares to ascend the Nile, the crocodile's kingdom, to engage a monster armed with teeth and claws and with scales more impenetrable even than iron. He himself is not so well equipped for biting, as he has a mouth bent towards his breast. But he charges
35 the enemy and, when close to him, suddenly dives under and with dorsal fins erect pierces the soft underbelly of the otherwise invulnerable crocodile.²⁵

John It's astonishing that an animal should instantly recognize his enemy, even if he's never seen it before, and know why it should be attacked and where it's vulnerable or can protect itself, since this knowledge is denied to
40 man, who wouldn't even shrink from a basilisk²⁶ unless warned or taught by bitter experience.

IOANNES FROBENIVS LECTORI S. D.
EN DAMVS

C. PLINII SECVNDI DI

VINVM OPVS CVI TITVLVS, HISTORIA MVNDE,

multo quàm antehac unquam prodijt emaculatus: idcirco primum ex annotationibus eruditorum hominum, præsertim Hermolai Barbari: deinde ex collatione exemplariorum, quæ hæctenus opera doctorum nobis quàm fieri potuit emendatissime sunt excusa: postremo ex fide vetustissimorum codicum, ex quibus non pauca restitui mus, quæ alioqui nemo, quamlibet eruditus, uel deprehendit, uel deprehendere poterat. Absit inuidia dicto. Vicimus superiores omnes. Si quis hanc palmam nobis eripuerit, non illi quidē inuidimus, sed studijs publicis gratulabimur. Bene uale lector, & fructu

Αγαθὴ τὸ ἔργον.

Additus est index, in quo nihil desideres.



Basileæ apud Io. Frobenium, Mense
Martio. An. M. D. XXV.

Pliny *Naturalis historia* title-page

Basel: Froben 1525

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Victoria University, Toronto

Ephorinus The horse,²⁷ as you know, is an animal naturally obedient to man. Between it and the bear, a creature harmful to man, there is deadly enmity. It recognizes the enemy sight unseen and instantly prepares for battle.

John What weapons does it fight with?

- 5 **Ephorinus** Cunning rather than strength. It jumps over the bear and in its leap kicks his head with its rear hoofs. Meantime the bear slashes the horse's belly with his claws.

- Against the asp, whose poison is fatal to man,²⁸ the ichneumon wages war.²⁹ This same creature is a deadly foe of the crocodile.³⁰ Elephants are
10 similarly disposed towards man, for they'll kindly escort a traveller back to the road when he's far astray; and they recognize and love their trainer.³¹ Stories are told too of their devotion to certain persons; for instance, in Egypt one fell in love with a girl who sold garlands, the sweetheart of Aristophanes the grammarian.³² Another was so infatuated with Menander, a Syracusan
15 youth, that it refused to eat if its beloved was out of sight.³³ But, to proceed no further with examples – which abound – when King Bocchus determined to behave cruelly towards thirty men, he had them tied to stakes and thrown before as many elephants. When men were sent to rush among the elephants and incite them, they could never make them act as executioners of the
20 royal cruelty.³⁴ And there is deadly warfare between this animal, a lover of man,³⁵ and Indian snakes (said to be the largest kind), often ending in mutual destruction in battle.³⁶ The snake, moreover, is hostile to man, even when unprovoked. Between the eagle and lesser snakes a comparable enmity exists,³⁷ though the eagle is harmless to man; more than that, it is even
25 said to feel amorous passion for certain girls.³⁸ There is murderous warfare between this bird and the cymindis³⁹ or night-hawk. An elephant detests a mouse, a creature bothersome to man also, and abhors fodder in which it has seen a mouse. Why this hatred exists is unknown. They do have good reason to dread a leech, because if they swallow one while drinking they
30 suffer grievous torture.⁴⁰

- Scarcely any animal is more friendly to man than a dog, none less so than a wolf, the very sight of which strikes a man dumb.⁴¹ Between these is the bitterest enmity, as the wolf is the greatest bane to sheep, a species totally dependent on the surveillance of men, whose special care it is to
35 protect an animal harmless and naturally serviceable to the human race.⁴² Against the wolf, in truth, as against a public enemy, all men go armed, with dogs as their main allies; a fact that gave rise to a proverb, 'We'll show no more mercy than we do to wolves.'⁴³ The sea hare is incurable poison if a man rashly tastes it, yet the touch of man is death to the hare.⁴⁴ A panther is
40 savage towards man and yet so terrified of a hyena that it refuses even to come near it. Hence the saying that if a man carries a piece of hyena hide

with him he's safe from attack by a panther. So acute is natural instinct. And they add that if you hang up the skins of both beasts back to back, the hair of the panther's comes off.⁴⁵

The spider is a domestic creature, so far as man is concerned, but so deadly to a snake that if he chances to spy one sunning itself under a tree, he lowers himself carefully on a thread and stings the snake on top of the head so sharply that it writhes in agony and finally dies.⁴⁶ I've been told by those who've witnessed it that there exists a similar feud between spider and toad; but a toad that has been stung cures itself by eating plantain.

Now for a British story.⁴⁷ Floors there, you know, are covered with green rushes.⁴⁸ A certain monk had carried some bundles of rushes to his cell, intending to spread them when he had time. As he was taking a nap after lunch, a large toad crawled over him and blocked his mouth, its four feet fixed on his upper and lower lips.⁴⁹ To pull off the toad was certain death;⁵⁰ not to remove it was something more cruel than death. Some persons recommended that the monk be carried, face up, to the window, on which a large spider had his web. This was done. Presently the spider, at the sight of his enemy, lowers himself on a thread, plants his sting on the toad, and returns to the web by the thread. The toad swelled up but was not dislodged. Again the spider stung; the toad swelled more but still lived. When stung a third time it withdrew its feet and fell off, dead.⁵¹ This favour the spider did for his host.

John That's a wonderful tale you tell.

Ephorinus I'll add something I didn't read but saw with these very eyes.

A monkey has an extraordinary dread of a tortoise. In Rome a certain man showed me an example of this fact. He put a tortoise on his boy's head and covered it with a cap. Then he brought him to the monkey. At once the monkey leaped joyfully on the lad's shoulders, ready to hunt lice. When the cap was removed, he discovered the tortoise. It was an astonishing sight, the extreme horror with which the brute jumped down, how terrified he was, how fearfully he looked back to see if the tortoise were coming after him.

Here's another example. We tied a tortoise to the chain by which the monkey was fastened, so he couldn't escape but could nevertheless see the tortoise. His agony was unbelievable; he nearly died of fright, turning his back at times and with his hind feet trying to drive the captive animal away. Finally he evacuated whatever was in his bowels or bladder. The scare gave him a fever, so that we had to release him from the chain and revive him with a mixture of water and wine.

John But there's no reason for a monkey to dread a tortoise.

Ephorinus Perhaps some reason concealed from us but known to nature.⁵² Why a finch should hate an ass is obvious: because the ass rubs itself against

the thistles in which the little bird nests, and eats the flowers. The finch is so terrified that whenever she hears an ass bray far off, she pushes the eggs out and her chicks fall from the nest in a fright. Yet she doesn't let her enemy go unpunished.

5 **John** But how does a finch harm an ass?

Ephorinus Pecks the sores it has from beatings and burdens and pricks the tender parts of its nostrils.

Something of the reason for the mutual enmity between foxes and kites can be guessed, too: that the greedy bird traps the other's young. Perhaps
 10 foxes do the same thing in return. (This is the reason for the feud between shrewmice and herons.) The same relation generally exists between the merlin, a small bird, and the fox. The merlin breaks raven's eggs; foxes prey on merlins and merlins on foxes, by nipping their cubs. When ravens see this they go to the aid of the foxes, as if against a common foe. But to account for
 15 the hatred between swans and eagles, raven and oriole, crow and owl, eagle and wren⁵³ is almost impossible, unless the eagle is envied because he's called king of birds. Why is the owl at odds with other, smaller birds, weasel with crow, dove with pyralis,⁵⁴ ichneumon-wasps with spiders,⁵⁵ ducks with gulls,⁵⁶ falcons with buzzard-hawks, jackals with lions? Why, moreover, do
 20 shrewmice dread a tree full of ants?⁵⁷ Whence so irreconcilable⁵⁸ a warfare between beetle and eagle, whose very natures provide the basis for a fable?⁵⁹ Why is it beetles won't live if brought to a certain district near Olynthus? And among water animals, why the fierce hatred between mullet and wolf-fish, as between eel and moray, which gnaw each other's tails?⁶⁰ A lobster has
 25 such great horror of a polypus that if it sees one nearby it dies of fear.⁶¹

So too a certain mysterious bond of affection unites some creatures in an extraordinary way, as peacocks and pigeons, doves and parrots, blackbirds and thrushes, crows and herons (which help each other in turn against foxes), and falcon and kite against the buzzard-hawk, their common
 30 enemy.⁶² The musculus, a tiny fish, acts as guide to whales by swimming ahead of them;⁶³ just why it wishes to perform this service is not clear. That the crocodile opens his jaw wide for the plover, a small bird, cannot be termed friendship, since each benefits by it. The crocodile is pleased to have his teeth cleaned and welcomes the pleasure of a scraping; the little bird
 35 hunts food, feeding on bits of fish left between the teeth.⁶⁴ For a similar reason the raven rides on a sow's back. Between the yellow wagtail⁶⁵ and titmouse animosity is so persistent that it is said their blood can't be mixed, just as it is said other birds' feathers are consumed if mingled with those of eagles.⁶⁶ A hawk is troublesome to doves, but these are defended by the
 40 kestrel, a small bird whose sight and sound the hawk strangely fears. This is not unknown to the doves. Wherever the kestrel is found, there they abide,

confident of their protector.⁶⁷ Who could explain why the kestrel is well disposed towards doves or why the hawk dreads the kestrel?

And as a very tiny animal is sometimes helpful to a monstrous big one, so, on the contrary, are the smallest deadly to the largest. There's a little fish resembling a scorpion, the size of a spider fish.⁶⁸ Sometimes it stings tunnies so sharply under the fin – tunnies bigger than a dolphin – that they jump into ships. It does the same to mullets.⁶⁹ Why is the lion, a beast that puts everyone in a tremble, scared of a cock's crow?⁷⁰

John Lest I fail to contribute my share⁷¹ to this feast, I'll relate what I once saw with my own eyes at the house of the distinguished Englishman,⁷² Thomas More. He kept at home a large monkey, which at that time, as it happened, was allowed to run loose in order to recover from a wound. At the end of the garden was a rabbit hutch; and a weasel had designs on the rabbits.⁷³ The monkey would watch this from a distance, quietly and idly, as long as he saw the rabbits were in no danger. But after the weasel had pried the pen loose from the wall and there was now danger that the rabbits, exposed to attack from the rear, would fall prey to the enemy, the monkey dashed up and by climbing on a board pulled the pen back to its former position so skilfully that a man could not have done it better – plain evidence of the fondness monkeys have for rabbits. The rabbits themselves didn't understand their danger but kissed their enemy through the fence. The monkey came to the rescue of innocence imperilled.

Ephorinus Monkeys delight in all young animals and love to fondle and embrace them.⁷⁴ But that devoted monkey deserved some reward for his devotion.

John He had it.

Ephorinus What?

John He found there a scrap of bread – thrown by boys, I suppose. He snatched it and ate it.

Ephorinus But more wonderful, in my opinion, is the fact that this type of sympathy and antipathy – for so Greeks call the natural feelings of friendship and hostility – is found even in things lacking soul or sense.⁷⁵ I say nothing of the ash tree, whose shadow, no matter how far it extends, snakes won't endure; so that if you surround the spot with a ring of fire, a snake would go into the flame sooner than take refuge at the tree.⁷⁶ We have countless examples of this sort of thing. Caterpillars encased in skin are transformed into butterflies by the secret operation of nature.⁷⁷ They show every sign of being dead; they don't even move when touched – unless a spider passes by. They don't feel a man's finger pressing, and yet they sense the delicate tread of the lightest of creatures. Thereupon the caterpillar comes to life at last.

John An insect yet unborn senses its mortal enemy!⁷⁸ Not altogether different from this are the stories told about victims of stabbings: if other persons approach, nothing unusual happens; but if the killer comes close, they begin to bleed at once, as though from a fresh wound. And by this sign,
 5 it is said, the murderer is often betrayed.⁷⁹

Ephorinus That's no mere fiction you've heard, either. But – to avoid hunting out Democritical stories⁸⁰ – don't we find by experiments an antipathy between oak and olive so strong that each dies if put in the other's trench?⁸¹ An oak is at such odds with a walnut tree that it dies if placed
 10 nearby,⁸² though indeed the walnut is harmful to almost all crops and trees.⁸³ Again, though a grapevine usually clasps everything with its tendrils, it shuns only cabbage, turning off in a different direction exactly as if it were aware of what it was doing.⁸⁴ Who warns the vine that its enemy is near? For cabbage juice is the antithesis of wine and is taken to prevent drunkenness.⁸⁵
 15 And the cabbage is not without an enemy of its own, since it dries up if placed against cyclamen and wild marjoram.⁸⁶

A similar feeling exists between hemlock and wine: hemlock is fatal to man, wine to hemlock.⁸⁷ What⁸⁸ is the mysterious bond between lily and garlic that causes them to take pleasure in each other's company when they
 20 grow side by side?⁸⁹ For the garlic is stronger and the lily's flowers more fragrant. What need to call to mind, in this connection, the marriage of trees, the females of which are sterile unless male ones are in the vicinity?⁹⁰ Oil mixes only with lime, though they have equal hatred of water.⁹¹ Pitch absorbs oil, though each is thick.⁹² Everything except gold floats on quicksilver; gold
 25 alone it attracts to itself and encloses.⁹³ What natural affinity causes adamant, resistant to anything however hard, to melt in goat's blood?⁹⁴ Nay,⁹⁵ you may even see antipathies among poisons themselves. If a scorpion happens to crawl through wolfsbane, it turns pale and becomes numb.⁹⁶ The herb named cerastes is so injurious to it that whoever has touched the seed
 30 merely with his fingers may handle a scorpion without harm.⁹⁷ But study of these matters, which are without number, is the province of the medical profession.

What is that power, whether of sympathy or antipathy, between steel and a magnet that causes a substance heavy by nature⁹⁸ to advance towards
 35 the magnet, 'cling' to it as if by a kiss, and withdraw without touching it?⁹⁹ Though water mixes readily with everything, especially with itself, there are nevertheless bodies of water that avoid mixing, as though from mutual hatred, as for example the stream that is carried on the surface of Lake Fucino, the Adda on Como, Ticino on Maggiore, Mincio on Garda, Oglio on
 40 Iseo, Rhône on Geneva. Some of these, in the course of many miles, carry only their own 'visiting' waters and emerge no larger than they entered.

The Tigris flows into Lake Arethusa and is borne through it as if a guest, so that neither colour nor fish nor the essential quality of the waters mingles. Moreover, though other rivers usually hurry on to meet the sea, some hide themselves in the earth before reaching the sea, as though from hatred of it.¹⁰⁰ We observe something comparable in winds, too. The south wind is noisome to man; the north, on the contrary, is healthful. One produces clouds; the other scatters them.¹⁰¹ If astrologers are to be trusted, there are certain dispositions of sympathy and antipathy in stars also.¹⁰² Some are friendly to man, some dangerous; again, some protect him against the power of evildoers. Thus there is nothing anywhere in nature that does not do man good or harm through these sympathies and antipathies.

John Perhaps man may discover something beyond the heavens, too, for if we believe the sages every mortal is attended by two spirits, one friendly, the other malevolent.¹⁰³

Ephorinus Enough for us to have reached as far as the sky, my friend, even if we don't jump beyond the pit.¹⁰⁴ 'Back to beeves and horses.'¹⁰⁵

John A big jump indeed!

Ephorinus More surprising is it that we find traces of love and hatred in the same species of animal, for no apparent reason. So grooms and cowherds try to convince us. In the same pastures or the same stables an ox likes to have a particular ox, a horse a certain horse, next to him, and won't endure a different one. In fact comparable feelings exist in animals of every kind, I believe, quite aside from partiality for sex. But in no species is it more evident than in man, since what Catullus declares about his feeling for Volusius is obvious in many:

I love you not, Volusius, and can't tell why;
I can say only this: I love you not.¹⁰⁶

In adults, perhaps, various explanations could be conjectured; in children, who are guided solely by instincts, what is it that draws one to another by so strong an affection and, furthermore, separates him from still another by so strong a dislike?¹⁰⁷ I myself, when a boy about eight, fell in with someone my age, or maybe a year older, who had such inordinate vanity that at every opportunity he would make up monstrous fibs on the spur of the moment. We would meet a woman. 'See her?' he'd say. 'I see her.' 'I've slept with her ten times.' We would go across a little narrow bridge by a mill. When he saw me shuddering at the sight of the water, which revealed its depth by its blackness, he said, 'I fell into this water once.' 'What's that you say?' 'I found the body of a man there, wearing a purse with three rings in it.' Since he never stopped lying, I, a boy, dreaded the fellow more than a viper, while

others were delighted by his lies – there was no particular reason, it was simply a strange instinctive reaction. This was not merely a stage I passed through; even today I have such a natural aversion to boastful liars that I feel a physical repulsion at the sight of them.¹⁰⁸ Homer notes something
 5 similar in Achilles, who declares liars are as hateful to him as the gates of hell themselves.¹⁰⁹ Though I was born with this trait, I seem to be fated, contrariwise, to have dealings all my life with liars and cheats.

John But I don't yet see the point of all this talk.

Ephorinus I'll tell you in a few words. Some people seek happiness by
 10 magic arts, some from the stars. I believe, for my part, that a person can find no surer road to happiness than by avoiding the kind of life from which he instinctively recoils and by following that to which he is attracted (always excluding what is dishonourable). Furthermore, he should avoid the company of those whose characters he finds incompatible with his own and
 15 associate with those to whom he is drawn by natural sympathy.

John In that event he'll have few friends.

Ephorinus Christian charity extends to the whole world; intimate friendship should be restricted to a few. And he who wrongs no man, however wicked, who will rejoice if the sinner repents – he loves all men, I should say, in the
 20 proper Christian spirit.¹¹⁰

NOTES

- 1 This prologue, like so much of what follows, is consonant with other remarks in Erasmus' main sources, Aristotle and Pliny; see for example Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9.1–2 608a10–610b19, Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.203–8. Pliny especially is a frequent and sometimes entertaining moralizer in his encyclopaedic survey of the wonders of the visible world.
- 2 Perhaps proverbial but not in *Adagia*, though the mutual hostility of cocks and partridges, which are closely related to quail, is attested by an Aesopic fable. See *Babrius and Phaedrus* ed and trans Ben Edwin Perry, Loeb Classical Library (London 1965) Appendix 425 no 23. Pliny has a pleasant account of cocks, the domestic roosters, in *Naturalis historia* 10.46–8.
- 3 With less learning, *crassiore Minerva*; see *Adagia* 1 i 37.
- 4 'Whose mortal tast' by Eve and Adam 'Brought Death into the World, and all our woe' (Milton *Paradise Lost* 1.2–3).
- 5 One of many recollections of sights seen and stories heard during Erasmus' Italian years, 1506–9. Parts of his description of lizards on pages 1036:13–1038:15 are translated, with acknowledgment to this colloquy, in Edward Topsell's *History of Serpents* (1608; STC 24124) 209–10.
- 6 Long known or believed to be fatal to snakes. Aristotle *Historia animalium* 8.29 607a29–30; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 7.15; Lucretius 4.638
- 7 On the medicinal properties of urine see Pliny *Naturalis historia* 28.65–7.

- 8 For some other reports of their friendliness towards man see B.J. Whiting's review of *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* ed Maria Leach, 2 vols (New York 1949–50) in *Speculum* 27 (1952) 232–3.
- 9 for ... visible] Added in the March 1533 edition
- 10 *ex viridi rubrum fecerat*. To an English reader, Erasmus' Latin immediately calls to mind the striking closure of a familiar passage in *Macbeth* 2.2.60–2:

... this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

On these lines see Kenneth Muir's note in his edition of *Macbeth* Arden Shakespeare, 7th edition revised (London 1951) and Michael Cameron Andrews 'Erasmus and *Macbeth*: 'Making the Green One Red' *Erasmus in English* 15 (1987–8) 30–1. *Macbeth* is believed to have been written in 1605 or 1606 but was not printed until the first folio of 1623. Topsell comes fairly close to 'making the green one red' ('of green he made him appear red') in *History of Serpents* (n5 above) 210. There is no direct evidence of Shakespeare's having read Topsell, or Erasmus' *Colloquia* either, but a reader may reserve the right to suspend disbelief.

Lizards bitten by snakes heal themselves by eating the herb dittany, as Erasmus says in *De pueris instituendis* (LB I 496B / CWE 26 309). This is from Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.97.

- 11 the enemy] Substituted for the ambiguous *ille* (1531) in the March 1533 edition
- 12 in Bologna] Added in the March 1533 edition.
- The plague scare there in 1506 was an experience Erasmus never forgot. See Allen Epp 296:175–204, 447:471–96, 1436:110–11 / CWE Epp 296:185–219, 447:514–45, 1436:120–1; also Beatus Rhenanus in Allen I 59:112–60:146.
- 13 *Adagia* III vii 38. An Aesopic fable; see *Babrius and Phaedrus* (n2 above) Appendix 458–9 no 196. Cf Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.99, 32.55.
- 14 Horace detested garlic, 'more deadly than hemlock' (*Epodes* 3). On the poisonous hemlock see 1044:17–18 and n87 below. For garlic's effect on snakes, see Pliny *Naturalis historia* 20.50.
- 15 as you say ... poisons] The first edition had only 'it's a remedy.' Garlic was also said to be a remedy for snakebite; see n89 below.
- 16 Whether fact or improbable fiction, a well-known peril. Rabelais tells of an example (*Gargantua and Pantagruel* 4.44); for another see Shakespeare *As You Like It* 4.3.105–15 or 2 *Henry VI* 3.2.254–63. Sacchetti (fourteenth century) speaks of making a snake come out of a man's stomach by having the man lie face down in a bowl of milk; the snake comes up to drink (D.P. Rotunda *Motif-Index of the Italian Novella in Prose* [Bloomington, Ind] no J1115.2.3).
- 17 scratching and scraping his claws] *pruritu scalptuque ungiunt*. The 1531 edition had 'scratching his feet' (*pruritu pedum*).
- 18 On the malicious cunning of the crocodile see Aelian 12.15 and *Adagia* II iv 60 on 'crocodile tears.'
- 19 Lord of the fishes (Oppian *Halieutica* 1.643) and, like the elephant, a favourite subject for writers on natural history, for both creatures were admired for their fabled intelligence, strength, and docility. Pliny's account of the dolphin (*Naturalis historia* 9.20–33) is typical but more picturesque and imaginative than that

- of Aristotle (*Historia animalium* 9.48 631a8–b4), who is more interested in their structure and habits. Like the elephant, lion, and eagle, the dolphin is prominent in emblematic art and in literature. In *Adagia*, for instance (II i 1 LB II 399E–402B), we hear much about the dolphin because of Aldo Manuzio's famous trademark of dolphin and anchor; on this see 'Penny-Pinching' n22. For an excellent compendium of fact and tradition about dolphins see D'Arcy W. Thompson *A Glossary of Greek Fishes* (London 1947) 52–6. They appear to delight modern as well as ancient naturalists. Their capacities as hunters and herders were reported long ago, as Erasmus reminds us, and see Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.29–32.
- 20 Greek in the original
- 21 A dolphin carried him across a bay to school and back every day. Pliny (*Naturalis historia* 9.25–7) says he would hesitate to tell such a story were it not that others too have written about it (cf Gellius 6.8 and Pliny the Younger *Letters* 9.33).
- 22 A musician whom sailors intended to kill for his money. But when he persuaded them to allow him first to play on his harp, the music attracted a shoal of dolphins (who are fond of music). Then the harper jumped overboard and a dolphin carried him to shore. The story is often told, but versions differ (Herodotus 1.24; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.28; Aelian *De natura animalium* 2.6, 6.15; Gellius 16.19; Plutarch *Moralia* 160E–162B *Septem sapientium convivium*).
- 23 indeed . . . their hunting] Added in the March 1533 edition
- 24 Aristotle says that, swimming under water, they hold in their breath like divers; the compressed air, when released, propels the dolphin over the ship (*Historia animalium* 9.48 631a22–33).
- 25 See Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.91–2.
- 26 An imaginary serpent believed to frighten all other creatures by its hiss, kill vegetation by its touch, and man by looking at him; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.78, 29.66. Cf Erasmus *Parabolae* CWE 23 250:5–7; *Lingua* LB IV 694C–D / ASD IV-1A 86:15–87:24 / CWE 29 320; and see 'The Godly Feast' 181:18–19 and n66.
- 27 The horse . . . his claws.] Added in the March 1533 edition. Pliny says that the bear has a weak head (*Naturalis historia* 8.130).
- 28 'Asps kill those they strike by torpor and coma, inflicting of all serpents the most incurable bites' (Pliny *Naturalis historia* 29.65; see also 8.86–7). Cf Aristotle *Historia animalium* 8.29 607a22; *Adagia* IV v 43; *Lingua* LB IV 694B / ASD IV-1A 86:7–8 / CWE 29 320.
- 29 Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9.6 612a17–20; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.87–8; Aelian 3.22. This ichneumon was the Egyptian rat, now identified with the mongoose. In spite of his smallness, the ichneumon overcame enemies; hence Luther thought it a 'type' of Christ (wa *Tischreden* 3 and Clemen 8 no 3851).
- 30 So Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.90; *Adagia* III vii 1 LB II 874F
- 31 Pliny gives a long account of elephants (*Naturalis historia* 8:1–37). They were almost unknown to the Greeks before the wars of Alexander the Great and the writing of Aristotle's *Historia animalium* in the fourth century BC. Hannibal introduced them to Europe when he crossed the Alps to invade Italy in 218 BC, bringing thirty-seven elephants with him. At first the Roman soldiers were terrified of them, but quickly recovered (Appian *Roman History* 7.7). All the elephants perished in the Italian campaign. Romans did not, either then or afterwards, employ elephants in war but at a later period in their history

used them in fights in the Roman Circus, where these beasts were a popular attraction (Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.19–22).

No elephants are known to have been brought into Europe between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, but in the later Middle Ages they were known by pictures, and a few captive elephants existed in western Europe. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century readers found them as fascinating as Aristotle, Pliny, and their successors had, not only because of size and strength but of their reputed intelligence, gentleness, sensitiveness (see Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9.46 630b19–30), and their sense of fairness and justice, of which Pliny and his literary descendants tell many wondrous tales. By the time Erasmus wrote of them, elephants had a special place in human opinions of undomesticated animals; they had even become moral and emblematic symbols or allegories, as Renaissance and Baroque art can show. This significance is treated definitively by W.S. Heckscher in 'Bernini's Elephant and Obelisk' *Art Bulletin* 29 part 3 (1947) 155–82, a study of the marble elephant supporting an Egyptian obelisk in Rome. This work (1667) was commissioned by Pope Alexander VII.

For elephants helping travellers, see Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.9; *ibidem* 8.6 on an elephant, a slow learner apparently, that was seen rehearsing by himself at night the lessons he had failed to learn satisfactorily that day. This story is in Plutarch *Moralia* 968C–D *Terrestriane an aquatilia animalia sint callidiora*.

- 32 *Adagia* III vii 1 LB II 875D; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.13; Aelian 7.43. Aristophanes of Byzantium was head of the Alexandrian library c 195.
- 33 This Menander was a soldier (Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.15).
- 34 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.15
- 35 Greek in the original, as at 1038:20–1 above
- 36 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.32–4. Struggle between elephant and serpent became an established topos in medieval and post-medieval art. See Heckscher (n31 above) 159. Cf *De pueris instituendis* LB I 510D–E / CWE 26 337 on teaching children about snakes and elephants.
- 37 On the enmity between eagles and snakes see Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.17; Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9.1 609a4.
- 38 *amatorios ignes sentire erga certas puellas* (and cf *De copia* CWE 24 616:2). Pliny is less dramatic; he tells of an eagle that had been reared by a girl and showed its gratitude by bringing birds and other game to her (*Naturalis historia* 10.18).
- 39 Or cybindis. Pliny says this night-hawk wages war to the death with the eagle (*Naturalis historia* 10.24).
- 40 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.29
- 41 Proverbial, as in Plato *Republic* 336C–D; Virgil *Eclogues* 9.53–4; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.80; Erasmus in Allen Ep 2191:71–2; *Adagia* I vii 86. See also 'The Fabulous Feast' n60.
- 42 Cf 'A Pilgrimage' 649:1–3.
- 43 *Adagia* II ii 27
- 44 The *lepus marinus*. Thompson *Greek Fishes* (n19 above) 142–3; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.155 and 32.8 describes its poison as exceptionally strong. Cf *Adagia* II i 15 and 'A Fish Diet' 680:11.
- 45 'Panther' and 'leopard' are usually synonymous in the writings of early naturalists. Its animosity towards hyenas is often mentioned (as by Aelian 6.22). Aristotle and Pliny supply miscellaneous information on panthers, leopards,

- and hyenas; see *Historia animalium* 9.6 612a7, 6.32 579b15–29 and *Naturalis historia* 8.62, 105–6. The ‘saying’ is in Pliny 28.93.
- 46 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.206; cf Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9.39 623a33–623b3.
- 47 Presumably a story Erasmus heard during one of his visits to England, but nothing more is known. In Christian art the toad became a symbol of evil and of a devil; so in *Paradise Lost* the good angels find the devil ‘Squat like a Toad, close at the eare of Eve’ (4.800). See ‘A Pilgrimage’ n117.
- 48 An Italian visitor to England (1497) comments on the custom of keeping fresh rushes on floors of houses because of the constant amount of mud from the streets (*Two Italian Accounts of Tudor England* ed and trans C.V. Malfatti [Barcelona 1953] 34). In a letter of 1532, addressed to an English physician and friend, Erasmus expresses strong disapproval of this custom because the rushes, which have in them all kinds of filth, are not changed often enough. Fresh rushes are merely laid on top of old ones: a danger to health as well as a malodorous nuisance (Allen Ep 1532:12–16 / CWE Ep 1532:15–21).
- 49 For a striking but slightly different example (four toads, covering the face) see T.S.R. Boase *Death in the Middle Ages* (London 1972), illustration 33 on page 45.
- 50 The toad’s venomous breath would kill the man on whose mouth it rested or anyone who attempted to remove it. See the seventh story of the fourth day in Boccaccio’s *Decameron* on the pervasive power of the poison. Aelian says that the toad’s breath produces a pallor that lasts several days (17.12); he also says the toad can kill with a belch a person who touches it (9.11).
- 51 On the thread see Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.206, and for accounts of how spiders weave their webs Pliny *Naturalis historia* 11.80–4 (11.84 describes how they hunt young frogs and lizards) and Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9.39 622b28–623b1. In his *History of Serpents* (n5 above) 192–3, Topsell includes this anecdote ‘related by Erasmus in his book on friendship.’ Sir Thomas Browne in *Pseudodoxia epidemica* (1646) says that when by way of experiment he put seven spiders in a glass with a toad, the toad ate them (3.27.6).
- 52 Many of the antagonisms and sympathies mentioned by Ephorus are noted (although not in the same order) in Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.203–7 and Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9.1–2 608b19–610b20; a few are listed in Aelian 5.48. Some of the examples appear also in *Adagia* III vii 1 LB II 874E–875B. Only additional or different references will be noted here.
- 53 On crow and owl see also Aelian 5.48 and 3.9. ‘Wren’ is a common translation of *trochilus*, a Latin transliteration of a Greek word also taken to mean ‘sandpiper’; see Aristotle *Historia animalium* 8.3 593b12 in *The Works of Aristotle* ed W.D. Ross IV trans and ann D’Arcy W. Thompson (Oxford 1910). On warfare between eagle and wren, see Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9.1 609b13, 9.12 615a16–19.
- 54 A fly or moth believed to live in fire; Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9.1 609a19; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.204, 11.119.
- 55 Venomous spiders, *phalangia*. The *ichneumon* meant here is not the Egyptian rat of 1040:8 above but a species of wasp (Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9.1 609a5 and n4 in the Oxford Works [n53 above]; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 11.72).
- 56 Pliny has *brenthos* (*Naturalis historia* 10.204), water-birds of uncertain species; Aristotle is equally vague (*Historia animalium* 9.1 609a23). Erasmus renders by *anatibus* ‘ducks.’

- 57 So Erasmus' text: *sorices formicosam horreant arborem*, but some texts of Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.206 have *formicosam arborem urucae cavant* 'caterpillars hollow out an ant-infested tree.' Other texts, including the one Erasmus obviously used, read *cavent* 'are wary of,' 'avoid.'
- 58 Whence so irreconcilable . . . near Olynthus?] Added in the edition of March 1533.
Olynthus is in Thrace. Pliny reports that the place is fatal to beetles but does not tell us why (*Naturalis historia* 11.99).
- 59 'Beetle' is *scarabaeus* or *cantharias*, the dung-beetle. On enmity between beetle and eagle see *Adagia* III vii 1 and 'Patterns' n78.
- 60 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.185; Aristotle *Historia animalium* 9.2 610b14–18; Aelian 5.48. Aelian does not mention that the fish gnaw each others' tails. On the mullet or mugil and the pike or *lupus* see Thompson *Greek Fishes* (n19 above) 108–10, 140–2. The moray is the *murena*, a favourite fish of the Romans; see 'The Profane Feast' 144:6 and 'The Epicurean' 1085:21.
- 61 This polypus is an octopus. See Thompson *Greek Fishes* (n19 above) 163–4; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.185; Aelian 6.22.
- 62 In addition to Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.207 and Aelian 5.48 see for example Xenophon *Cyropaedia* 2.1.28 and *Memorabilia* 2.3.4.
- 63 The sea-mouse; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.186
- 64 The bird that cleans the crocodile's teeth is said by Aristotle (*Historia animalium* 9.6 612a20–4) and Pliny (*Naturalis historia* 8.90) to be a *trochilus*, which here is probably the Egyptian plover (see n53 above, and D'Arcy W. Thompson's n2 on Aristotle *Historia animalium* 612a20).
- 65 yellow wagtail] The first edition of the colloquy had *florum*, changed to *anthum* in the edition of March 1533.
- 66 On the wagtail and titmouse see Pliny and Aristotle as cited in n52 above; on the incompatibility of the eagle's feathers with those of other birds, Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.15.
- 67 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.109
- 68 A weever or viper-fish or spider-fish, which has a sharp sting. See Thompson *Greek Fishes* (n19 above) 56–7.
- 69 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 9.55
- 70 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 10.48; a commonplace. Erasmus' comment is typical: 'In the same way great princes are sometimes made to fear the hostile attacks of humble folk' (*Parabolae* CWE 23 249:22–4).
- 71 *asymbolus*. See 'Faith' n124.
- 72 distinguished Englishman] In the first edition (September 1531) More was identified accurately as 'now chancellor of the realm; that is, the highest judge.' He had been appointed to this office in October 1529. He resigned as chancellor on 16 May 1532, and accordingly Erasmus changed the text here to bring it up to date.

All of More's biographers speak of his fondness for birds and animals, particularly his pleasure in watching their behaviour. He kept many different kinds of birds as well as a fox, ferret, weasel, rabbits, and monkey. These creatures, as Erasmus was the first to record from personal recollection in his 1519 account of More and his family (Ep 999), were of interest to the author of the *Colloquies* too. He shared More's dislike of hunting animals; see the

- introduction to 'Hunting' 109 and the description of a bullfight witnessed in Rome (Allen Ep 3032:417–33). In Holbein's pen-and-ink sketch of the More family (1527) the monkey is shown at lower right. Holbein gave this drawing to Erasmus; after Erasmus' death it was owned by Bonifacius Amerbach and later was sold to the city of Basel, where it remains. A copy by Rowland Locky (d 1616) of Holbein's painting of the More family added a dog at More's feet.
- 73 One of More's Latin poems concerns a rabbit that escaped a weasel only to be caught in a hunting net (*Latin Epigrams* 27 and 149 no 19).
- 74 As Pliny had noted (*Naturalis historia* 8.216) and probably Erasmus had observed for himself. Consult H.W. Janson *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and Renaissance Studies* of the Warburg Institute 20 (London 1952).
- 75 But they have a 'vegetative' soul, as Eutrapelus explains to Fabulla in 'The New Mother.' See particularly 603:1–605:2.
- 76 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 16.64. Also in *Parabola* CWE 23 265:30–6 and *Lingua* LB IV 694F–695A / ASD IV-1A 88:43–9 / CWE 29 320–1.
- 77 See Aristotle *Historia animalium* 5.19 551a13–25 and Pliny *Naturalis historia* 11.75–6.
- 78 An insect ... enemy!] 'It senses ... enemy' in the 1531 edition becomes 'An insect yet unborn ... enemy!' in the edition of March 1533.
- 79 Tales of this kind are so numerous that it is impossible to know whether Erasmus was thinking of specific cases or of legends. A slain man can disquiet his killer in many ways (Plato *Laws* 9.865E). Even if the murderer acted upon what he deemed justifiable principles, not mere passion, he may be pursued by the Furies, like Orestes. For examples, from different cultures, of the surprising discovery that murder will out, see Stith Thompson *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* rev ed (Bloomington, Ind and London 1966) VI, entries on 'Murder' and 'Murderer.'
- 80 A reference to incredible stories attributed by Pliny in *Naturalis historia* 28.112–19 and 10.137 to Democritus. Gellius (10.12.1–8) relates the tales but maintains that they are not worthy of the name of Democritus.
- 81 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 24.1
- 82 Ibidem; cf Erasmus *In Nuce* Ovidii LB I 1197B / ASD I-1 156:24–6 / CWE 29 141.
- 83 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 17.89, 91
- 84 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 24:1, and cf *Adagia* I v 38.
- 85 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 20.84, and see *Adagia* I v 38.
- 86 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 24:1–2
- 87 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 14.58, and cf 14.138; cf Erasmus *Lingua* LB IV 688A, 695B / ASD IV-1A 77:677–8, 88:62–3 / CWE 29 309, 321. See also Plutarch *Moralia* 61B–C *Quomodo adulator ab amico internoscatur* (translated by Erasmus LB IV 1A–22E). The moral, Plutarch adds, is that flattery and candor do not mix; a conclusion repeated by Erasmus in *Parabola* CWE 23 146:12–17 and more extensively in the dedicatory letter to Pieter Gillis (Allen Ep 312:58–69 / CWE Ep 312:63–76 / CWE 23 131–4).
- 88 What is ... vicinity?] Added in the March 1533 edition
- 89 I have not found the source of this assertion, but some inferences or conjectures are permissible. Dioscorides says that both garlic and lily are remedies for the bites of venomous snakes; see *Materia medica* ed Max Wellmann 3 vols (Berlin 1958) 2.152; in John Goodyer's English translation 2.182. Goodyer's translation was made c 1655 but never printed until 1933: *The Greek Herbal of Dioscorides* ed

Robert T. Gunther (Oxford 1933; repr New York 1959). Pliny says the same; see *Naturalis historia* 20.51 (garlic), 21.126 (lily root). A plant named scordion, which smells like garlic, is also efficacious (Pliny *ibidem* 25.63, 100, 127); see Dioscorides 3.111 (Wellmann) / 3.123 (Gunther). On the lily see Dioscorides 3.102 (Wellman) / 3.116 (Gunther). 'Scordion' is a Greek word borrowed by Latin and used in ancient medical texts; it is recorded in Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott *Greek-English Lexicon* rev ed (Oxford 1968) and *Harper's Latin Dictionary* rev Charlton D. Lewis and Charles Short (New York 1879). 'Lily' is a notably inclusive name in ancient usage, for instance in the Bible, for various plants. Erasmus calls attention to the differences between lily and garlic, but they are not totally dissimilar. Botanically garlic belongs to the lily family. Nor is the lily always fragrant, at least in folklore. 'Lilies are fair in show but foul in smell' (Thomas Lodge *Rosalind* [1590], first poem). Cf Shakespeare: 'Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds' (Sonnet 94:14). But Erasmus is at liberty to fancy that they like to live in the same neighbourhood.

- 90 Cf Theophrastus *Historia plantarum* 3.8.1 and Erasmus *De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 417E-F / ASD I-2 4102-5 / CWE 25 134.
- 91 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 24.3
- 92 *Ibidem*
- 93 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 33.99-100
- 94 Cf Pliny *Naturalis historia* 20.2; Erasmus *Parabolae* CWE 23 221:26-9 (where Pliny 37.59, which is about the hardness of adamant but does not mention goat's blood, is cited).
- 95 Nay . . . without harm.] Like the passage above on lily and garlic, these lines were added in the edition of March 1533.
- 96 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 27.6
- 97 In the sentence about 'the herb named cerastes,' 'injurious to it' means to a scorpion; 'seed' means seed 'of the herb named cerastes.' That Erasmus wrote 'cerastes' there must be accepted, unless we prefer to suspect a copyist's or printer's error. The entire sentence survived unchanged in the *Opera omnia* of 1540 and in LB. But there is a difficulty, because 'cerastes' is not the name of a herb or plant but commonly of a snake, the venomous 'horned' viper of northern Africa (Pliny *Naturalis historia* 8.85; Aristotle *Historia animalium* 2.1 500a4, and see note 4 in the Oxford *Works* iv [n53 above]; Nicander *Theriaca* 258). Pliny names many kinds of plants that are remedies for, or protection against, a scorpion's sting (examples in *Naturalis historia* book 20 subsections 25, 41, 46, 50, 62, 117, 121, 125, 129, 145, 157, 162, 164, 171, 175, 182, 185, 209, 223, 232, 236, 245, 252, 256), but we may search in vain for mention of cerastes among them. Both 'cerastes' and 'scorpion' had more than one meaning in ancient texts. 'Cerastes' usually meant the horned viper, but the name also denoted an insect harmful to fig trees (Theophrastus *Historia plantarum* 4.14.5, 5.4.5; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 17.221). 'Scorpion' had a variety of meanings. It denoted 1/ the poisonous arachnid often described by naturalists and other writers (see for example Pliny *Naturalis historia* 11.86-91 on 'this curse of Africa'). 'Scorpion' (or 'scorpaena') meant also 2/ a small sea fish with sharp spines (see Aristotle *Historia animalium* 5.9 543a7 and n4 in the Oxford *Works*; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 20.150, 32.102; Thompson *Greek Fishes* [n19 above] 245-6). It was 3/ the name of a plant having seed that resembles the tail of a scorpion (Pliny *Naturalis historia* 13.116, 22.39); this was also called *tragos* 'goat,' 'goat-plant' (Pliny *Naturalis*

historia 27.142). Additionally 'scorpion' referred to 4/ a spiny, leafless plant (mentioned by Theophrastus *Historia plantarum* 6.1.3, 6.4.1–2; Pliny *Naturalis historia* 21.91). Furthermore 'scorpion' sometimes referred to 5/ wolfsbane, which 'has a root like a scorpion' (Theophrastus *Historia plantarum* 9.18.2). Two passages in Pliny invite particular attention. In 20.25 he writes: 'Radishes [*raphani*] are also useful for poisons, counteracting the sting of the cerastes and of the scorpion. With hands rubbed with radish or its seed you may handle these creatures without fear, and a radish placed on scorpions kills them' (*Naturalis historia* Loeb Classical Library, 10 vols [London and Cambridge, Mass 1949–62] vi trans W.H.S. Jones [1951] 17; Dioscorides 2.112 [Wellmann] / 2.137 [Gunther] says radish seed is an antidote to the bite of a viper but omits the scorpion). In 22.39 Pliny repeats that the seed of the scorpion plant will overpower scorpions. The assertion in the colloquy that whoever has touched the seed of the plant 'may handle a scorpion without harm' surely comes from these lines. The presence together of 'cerastes' and 'scorpion' in the first sentence above from Pliny *Naturalis historia* 20.25 suggests that when Erasmus wrote 'the herb cerastes' he may have forgotten momentarily which word, 'viper' or 'scorpion,' denoted a plant as well as an arachnid.

98 On 'light' and 'heavy,' see the next colloquy, 'A Problem.'

99 *Adagia* I vii 56, citing Pliny *Naturalis historia* 36.126–30

100 These examples are taken from Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.224–5; cf 9.75.

'Arethusa' is misleading. The Arethusa most widely known was a spring near Syracuse in Sicily (see Ovid *Metamorphoses* 5.573–640). Another Arethusa was a town on the Orontes in Syria. But the Arethusa flowing in the Tigris is Aretissa (*Naturalis historia* 2.226), later called Arsissa and today Van. On this lake consult *Enciclopedia Italiana* 34 962 sv 'Van' or Jean Beaujeu's notes in his edition of Pliny *Naturalis historia* book 2 (Paris 1950) 257–8.

101 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.126–7

102 For Erasmus' opinions on astrology and astrologers see 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n14.

103 See *Adagia* I i 76 and 'Rash Vows' n22.

104 Proverbial for not only doing well but succeeding beyond all expectations. The reference is to an ancient Greek athlete who in addition to leaping over a fifty-foot pit landed five feet beyond it. *Adagia* I x 93 cites Lucian *Somnium* 6 and many other texts.

105 That is, back to what concerns us most; a memory of Homer *Iliad* 1.154. See *Adagia* II vii 97. I owe the reference to Erika Rummel.

106 Catullus 36 and 95 express his contempt for Volusius, an obscure scribbler, but the lines quoted here are from Martial 1.32 (and cf 3.17), and are addressed to one Sabidius, otherwise unknown. An English imitation by Tom Brown (d 1704) about the Oxford dignitary John Fell is well known:

I do not love thee, Doctor Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell;
But this alone I know full well:
I do not love thee, Doctor Fell.

The Latin verses, again with the name Volusius, are quoted by Erasmus in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* when contrasting the mysterious agreements or

differences in temperament that cause us to like or reject someone (*Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB v 671A–C).

- 107 These lines remind one of what Erasmus had written of his own irresistible attraction to literature ‘by a kind of secret natural force.’ See CWE 23 xxii n6.
- 108 This recollection of a boastful liar he knew when a boy may or may not be authentic autobiography, but Erasmus’ deep-rooted aversion to liars and charlatans was sincere and unmistakable. It is found many times in his letters and other writings, for instance in the *Compendium vitae* (Allen 1 51:137–9 / CWE 4 409:154–7). *Moriae encomium* and the *Colloquies* (for example ‘The Liar and the Man of Honour’ and ‘Things and Names’) include many illustrations of his detestation of lies and liars; see Margolin ‘Erasme et la vérité in *Recherches érasmiennes* 45–69. He could say with the psalmist: ‘Facientes praevaricationes odivi’ (100:3 Vulg). If his writings have few single passages on truth and falsehood as memorable and quotable as some in Montaigne’s ‘Of Presumption’ (*Essays* 2.17) or Bacon’s ‘Of Truth,’ they have a forceful eloquence of their own that emphasizes Erasmus’ commitment to ‘truth in the inward parts.’
- 109 *Iliad* 9.312–13
- 110 And he . . . Christian spirit] Added in the March 1533 edition

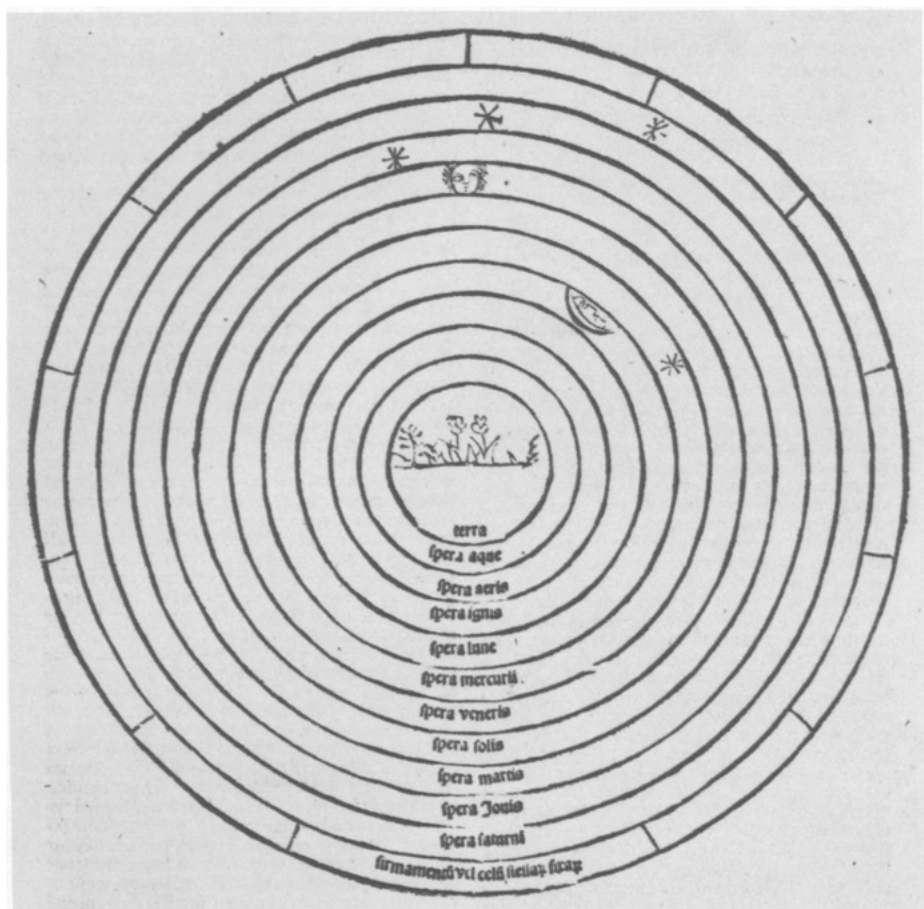
A PROBLEM

Problema

First printed in the March 1533 edition.

In this brief dialogue Erasmus attempts to clarify the meaning of a topic in Aristotelian physics, as in an earlier colloquy, 'The New Mother,' he included a lesson on the soul from Aristotle's psychology in *De anima*. Aristotle's philosophy of nature, set forth in the *Physics*, *De caelo*, and *De generatione et corruptione*, opposed the doctrines of the Pythagoreans and presocratic philosophers on many fundamental questions and differed also in important ways from those of Plato's *Timaeus*. Most of the topics discussed in 'A Problem' are treated in *De caelo*, especially book 4, which is obviously the main source of Erasmus' dialogue. The Greek text of *De caelo*, with translation and notes by W.K.C. Guthrie (1960) is easily available in the Loeb Classical Library series. Translations of *Physics*, *De caelo*, and *De generatione et corruptione* are printed together in *The Works of Aristotle* ed W.D. Ross II (Oxford 1930), which is the source of quotations in this introduction and in the notes; the translation of *De caelo* was made by J.L. Stocks. There are many valuable commentaries, old and modern.

The questions posed by the two speakers take for granted the structure of the Aristotelian cosmos. What puzzles Curio is the centre of the earth and the meaning of 'heavy' and 'light.' Since these are subdivisions or corollaries of previous and major topics in *De caelo*, the reader may find useful a brief but characteristic statement of Aristotle's conception of the universe, a conception on which nearly everything said about 'heavy' and 'light' is based: 'The heaven as a whole neither came into being nor admits of destruction, as some assert, but is one and eternal, with no end or beginning of its total duration, containing and embracing in itself the infinity of time' (*De caelo* 2.1 283b26–9). The heaven (a word usually singular in Greek and Latin but plural in English when denoting the firmament or vault of the sky) is a vast system of revolving spheres whose movement, being divine, is therefore eternal. At its centre is a stationary, spherical earth (2.3 286a10–21). (On its position, its immobility, and spherical shape see 2.13–14 293a15–298a20.) About this fixed sphere the celestial spheres revolve and the natural movements of 'simple' terrestrial bodies such as fire and earth take place (1.2 268b20–269b13). Fire is always light and moves upward, while earth and all earthy things move downwards or towards the centre . . . Now, that which produces upward and downward movement is that which produces weight and lightness, and that which is moved is that



The geocentric universe according to Aristotle, showing the round earth, its four concentric spheres, one for each of the four elements, and, surrounding these, the seven planetary spheres. The outermost sphere is identified as 'firmament or heaven of fixed stars,' and its twelve segments signify the zodiac.

Aristotle *Libri de celo et mundo*, Huntington Library 89094 fol 44, 1495
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which is potentially heavy or light, and the movement of each body to its own place is motion towards its own form' (4.2 308b13-15, 4.3 310a31-310b1).

The dominance of Aristotelian thought in many fields of study during the medieval epoch in western history is an oft-told tale. Aristotle's influence lasted through Erasmus' century and for some subjects still continues. With regard to physics, however – to cosmology, dynamics, theories of motion, space, and gravity – critics in the later Middle Ages produced significant modifications and objections or refutations. For example, Jean Buridan (d c 1358), emphasized the power of *impetus* or 'accidental gravity' (see the quotations in A.C. Crombie *Medieval and Early Modern Science* 2 vols, rev ed [Garden City, NY 1959] II 67-73). Another Frenchman, Nicole Oresme (d 1382), a bishop and like Buridan rector of the University of Paris, found fault with Aristotle in his *Traité de la sphère* and *Livre du ciel et du monde*, a commentary on *De caelo*. He argued for the possibility of other worlds and opposed Aristotle's theory that the heavenly spheres moved around a stationary earth. His *Livre du ciel et du monde* denied that the universe has a fixed centre; he thought the earth moves with a daily motion but the heavens do not, a conclusion which foreshadows those of Copernicus and Galileo. Nevertheless at the end of his book 2 he concedes that since Scripture states plainly that the earth cannot be moved (Psalm 93:1; Vulg 92:1 and the Septuagint have 'will not' instead of 'cannot'), it is best to believe the heaven moves and the earth stands still (in the edition and translation by A.D. Menut and A.J. Denomy [Madison, Wis 1968] 537-9; this edition appeared in *Mediaeval Studies* 3 [1941] 185-280, 4 [1942] 159-297, and 5 [1943] 167-33, and then separately [New York 1943]).

Two years before printing this colloquy, Erasmus had written a prefatory letter to an edition of the Greek text of Aristotle edited by Simon Grynaeus. This letter, addressed to John More (1508-47), the youngest child and only son of Thomas More, praises Aristotle as supreme philosopher and urges John to emulate his distinguished father (Ep 2432). Erasmus wrote also a preface to the Ptolemy (Ep 2760) issued by the Froben press in 1533; this was the first Greek edition to be printed.

A few works, mainly in English, may be recommended to those who are not already acquainted with the history of science. One of the best surveys is Crombie's *Medieval and Early Modern Science*, with essential bibliographies. Others are C.S. Lewis' *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge 1964); S.K. Heninger's *The Cosmological Glass: Renaissance Diagrams of the Universe* (Huntington Library, San Marino California 1977), which has many illustrations; and J.-C. Margolin's essay on Erasmus and nature (see the bibliographical note at the

end of the introduction to 'Sympathy,' 1035–6 above). Selected writings of Aneliese Maier on late medieval natural philosophy are translated and edited in Steven D. Sargent's *On the Threshold of Exact Science* (Philadelphia 1982).

Erasmus' colloquy adds nothing to Aristotelian scholarship, nor was it intended to do so, but as exposition in dialogue on a specific Aristotelian topic – heavy and light – it needs no apologies. It is designed to do something all useful instruction aims at, namely, to stimulate curiosity and encourage further inquiry besides imparting information.

CURIO, ALPHIUS¹

Curio There's something I'd be glad to learn from you, an expert on many subjects, if it would be no trouble to you.

5 **Alphius** Go ahead, Curio, ask whatever you please, so you won't fail to live up to your name.

Curio Well, I don't mind being called Curio, provided you don't add that monosyllabic name of an animal hateful to Venus and Minerva alike.²

Alphius Tell me what you want, then.

10 **Curio** I want to know what we mean by heavy and light.

Alphius You might just as well ask what hot and cold are. Problems of this sort you put to porters rather than to me; or, if you prefer, to asses, who show the weight of their burden by drooping ears.³

Curio But I'm looking for a philosophical answer, not an asinine one,
15 especially from Alphius.

Alphius 'Heavy' is that which by its own nature is borne downward; 'light,' that which is borne upward.

Curio Then why don't the antipodes, who are below us, fall into the sky beneath them?⁴

20 **Alphius** People there wonder in like manner why you don't fall into the sky that hangs over and not beneath you. For the sky is above everything that is included within. The antipodes aren't below you any more than you're above them; they can be opposite but not below us. Otherwise you'd do better to wonder when rocks on the surface of the antipodes don't fall and
25 break the sky.

Curio What, then, is the natural resting place of heavy things and, on the other hand, of light ones?

Alphius All heavy things are borne earthward by their natural motion; all light ones skyward.⁵ We're not speaking now of forcible or animate motion.⁶

30 **Curio** So there's some motion called 'animate'?

Alphius Yes.

Curio What is it?

Alphius Movement according to the four positions of the body: forward, backward, to the right and left, and in a circle.⁷ In the beginning and end it is swifter, in the middle slower. In the beginning, energy increases the speed; towards the end, hope of reaching the creature's destination.

Curio What happens to other creatures I don't know, but I have a maidservant who's tired before she starts work and worn out before she finishes.⁸ – But go on with what you began.

Alphius It's by their natural motion, I say, that heavy things are borne downward. And the heavier anything is, the faster the motion with which it is borne to earth; the lighter it is, the faster the motion with which it is carried aloft.⁹ In forcible motion, on the contrary, what is more rapid at the start gradually slows down; in natural motion the opposite would happen:

as for instance an arrow shot into the sky and a stone falling from a height.¹⁰

Curio But I used to think, for my part, that men run over the globe like tiny ants over a huge ball; they stick to it everywhere and not one falls off.

Alphius The reasons are: some unevenness of the surface of the globe; next, a certain roughness on the feet of the ants as well – nearly all insects have it; finally, the lightness of minute bodies. If you don't believe this, try a glass sphere quite smooth and bare. You'll see that the only ants that don't fall off are those which walk on the top.

Curio If some god bored straight through the middle of the earth – through the centre perpendicularly to the antipodes, as cosmographers are wont to do when representing the position of the whole earth with wooden globes – then, if you threw a stone into the hole, how far would it be carried?

Alphius To the centre of the earth, the resting place of all heavy bodies.¹¹

Curio And what if the antipodes sent a stone from the opposite side?

Alphius Then stone would meet stone near the centre and each would rest there.

Curio Come, now: were your statement true – that natural motion is speeded more and more if nothing intervenes – a stone or lead thrown into the hole would go past the centre, because of the force of the motion; and once the centre is passed, the motion will resume its force.

Alphius Lead would never reach the centre without being melted, but if a stone should go past the centre by forcible motion, it would first slow down and would return to the centre in just the same way that a stone thrown high by force returns to earth.¹²

Curio But returning by natural motion, it is again carried past the centre by the impetus produced; so the result will be that the stone never does come to rest.

Alphius In the end it will rest – going back and forth until an equilibrium is reached.

Curio But if there's no vacuum in nature, that hole must be full of air.

Alphius Granted.

- 5 **Curio** Therefore a body naturally heavy will hang in air.

Alphius Of course, just as steel hangs in air when magnets are in equilibrium.¹³ But what cause for wonder is it if one stone should hang in mid-air when the whole earth, loaded down by so many rocks, hangs in the same manner?

- 10 **Curio** But where is the centre of the earth?

Alphius Where is the centre of a circle?

Curio Well, it's an indivisible point. If the centre of the earth is so infinitesimal, whoever bores through the middle of the earth will destroy the centre, and heavy objects will have no place to which they can be carried.

- 15 **Alphius** You're trying to be funny.

Curio Don't be annoyed, please; whatever I say springs from a desire to learn. If a person bored through the earth, not through the exact centre but to the side, missing the centre by a dozen miles, say, where then will a stone thrown in be carried to?

- 20 **Alphius** It won't be carried straight through the hole; rather, it *will* go straight, but to the centre, and thus before reaching the middle will lie at rest in the earth on the left, if the centre's on the left.

Curio But what is it that makes a body heavy or light?

- 25 **Alphius** To this question let God answer why he made fire the lightest, thing of all, air the next lightest; earth the heaviest, water the next heaviest.¹⁴

Curio Why then do clouds of water hang in the upper air?

Alphius Because, by attraction of the sun, they assume a fiery nature, as smoke is expelled from damp wood by extreme heat.

- 30 **Curio** Then why do they fall with so much weight that they sometimes level mountains?

Alphius Condensation¹⁵ and density add weight. Otherwise they might seem supported by the air below, as a thin sheet of iron is supported in the surface of the water.

- 35 **Curio** And so you think that whatever has the most fiery nature is lightest and whatever has the most terrestrial one is heaviest?

Alphius You're not far from the mark.¹⁶

Curio But not every kind of air is equally light, nor is every kind of earth equally heavy. The same goes for water, perhaps.

- 40 **Alphius** No wonder, since those you've named are not pure elements but mingled with various others. Thus it is probable that the lightest earth is that which has the most fire or air mixed with it; the heaviest water that

containing the heavier earth – such as ocean and salt water, I believe.¹⁷ Likewise the air nearest to water or earth is heavier, or certainly less light, than that which is far from the earth.

Curio Which has more of a terrestrial nature, a stone or lead?

5 **Alphius** A stone.

Curio And yet lead is heavier than stone, proportionately.

Alphius Because of density: for a stone is more rarefied and therefore has more air than lead has. That's why we see a certain kind of dry earth does not sink but floats if thrown into water. For the same reason we see whole
10 fields floating,¹⁸ held up by the hollow roots of reeds and other marshy plants interwoven.

Curio Hence perhaps the lightness of pumice-stones, too.

Alphius Because they're full of cavities. Besides, they're dried out by intense heat, for they're produced in burning places.

15 **Curio** Why is cork light?

Alphius The reason has been stated already: rarefaction.

Curio Which is heavier, lead or gold?

Alphius Gold, in my opinion.

Curio Yet gold seems to have more of a fiery nature.

20 **Alphius** Because it shines by night like fire, as Pindar says?¹⁹

Curio Of course.

Alphius But the density is greater in gold.

Curio How do we know that?

Alphius Goldsmiths will tell you that neither silver nor lead nor copper nor
25 any similar kind of metal is hammered more thin than gold. By the same reasoning philosophers discovered that nothing is more fluid than honey and oil, because if you spread these by smearing them, the liquid is diffused very widely and dries more slowly.

Curio But which is heavier, oil or water?

30 **Alphius** If you mean linseed oil, I think oil is heavier.

Curio Then why does oil float on water?

Alphius Not because of its lightness but because of the fiery nature of oil, as well as a peculiar resistance to water that all fats have²⁰ – the same that is found in what is called 'unsinkable'²¹ grass.

35 **Curio** Then why doesn't white-hot iron float?

Alphius Because heat isn't natural to it and therefore the iron penetrates the water more quickly, since the intense heat dispels the resistant moisture. Thus an iron wedge goes to the bottom more quickly than a thin sheet.

Curio Which is harder to handle, white-hot or cold iron?

40 **Alphius** White-hot.

Curio Then it's heavier.

Alphius Yes – if it's easier to carry burning straw than cold flint in your hand!

Curio Why is one piece of wood lighter or heavier than another?

Alphius Density and rarefaction.

- 5 **Curio** Yet a certain member of the British royal household,²² with whom I was personally acquainted, showed us at dinner a piece of what he said was aloe wood. It was so solid it could be taken for stone, so light when you balanced it in your hands that it seemed like a reed – and lighter, if there's anything lighter than a dry reed. Placed in wine (a means of expelling poisons, he thought), it sank to the bottom at once, almost more quickly than lead.²³

- 10 **Alphius** This is not always due to density or rarefaction but to a special and mysterious affinity in things that causes attraction or repulsion, as a magnet attracts steel,²⁴ and a vine avoids cabbage,²⁵ and fire leaps even from a distance towards naphtha in a lower place;²⁶ though naphtha is heavy by nature, fire light.

Curio Every kind of brass floats on quicksilver; gold alone sinks and is covered over, though quicksilver is an extremely light substance.²⁷

Alphius I've no explanation except a special affinity in nature, for quicksilver is so constituted that it refines gold.

- 20 **Curio** Why does the river Arethusa cross the Sicilian Sea underneath and not flow on the surface instead – since you said earlier that sea water is heavier than river water?²⁸

Alphius Some natural yet mysterious discord is the reason.

- Curio** Why do swans float when men entering the same water go to the bottom?

- Alphius** The reason is not only the hollowness and lightness of their wings but the dryness, too, which water shuns. That's why water or wine forms a ball if put on extremely dry linen but spreads quickly on damp cloth. Likewise, if you fill a dry cup or a grease-lined one with liquid, and pour in a little more than the cup holds, the liquid in the middle collects into a round before it spills over the edge.

Curio Why do ships carry lighter cargoes in rivers than in the sea?

Alphius Because river water is more rarefied. For the same reason birds balance themselves more easily in heavier than in extremely rarefied air.

- 35 **Curio** Why don't 'floaters'²⁹ sink?

Alphius Because their skin is dried out by the sun and is made both lighter and more resistant to moisture.

Curio Why does iron hammered into a wide sheet float when the same iron sinks if a solid mass?

- 40 **Alphius** The reason is partly dryness, partly air gathered between water and sheet.

Curio Which is heavier, water or wine?

Alphius Wine won't yield to water, in my judgment.

Curio Why then do people who buy wine from wineshops find water instead of wine at the bottom of the jug?

- 5 **Alphius** Because wine has a certain oil-like fattiness that resists water. A ready proof is that the better the wine, the harder it is to mix with water, and the more strongly it burns if ignited.

Curio Why does no living body sink in the Dead Sea?³⁰

- 10 **Alphius** It's not up to me to account for all of nature's miracles. It has certain secrets we're to marvel at, not comprehend.

Curio How can a thin man be heavier than a stout one if they're alike in other respects?

Alphius Because bones are thicker than flesh and therefore heavier.

- 15 **Curio** Why is the same man heavier when hungry than after lunch, when he has added weight to his body?

Alphius Spirits are enlarged by meat and drink and add lightness to the body. Hence too a merry man is lighter than a sad one and a dead one much heavier than a live one.³¹

- 20 **Curio** But how come the same man may make himself heavier or lighter when he pleases?

Alphius When he holds his breath he makes himself lighter; when he exhales, heavier. So a bladder, inflated and tied shut, floats; punctured, it sinks. – But when will Curio stop harping on 'why'?

- 25 **Curio** I'll stop if you'll answer just a few more questions. Is the sky heavy or light?

Alphius Whether it's light, I don't know. Certainly it can't be heavy, since it has a fiery nature.

Curio Then what's the meaning of the old proverb 'What if the sky should fall?'³²

- 30 **Alphius** The simple ancients, relying on Homer, believed the sky was made of iron. But Homer called it 'iron' because of its resemblance in colour, not weight;³³ as we call something 'ashen' if it has the shade of ash.

Curio Is the sky coloured then?

- 35 **Alphius** Not really, but it seems so to us on account of the air and the moisture in mid-air; just as the sun now seems to redden, now gleams yellow, now is dazzling white, though in fact it undergoes no such changes. Likewise the image of the rainbow is not in the sky but in the moist air.

Curio But – to come to an end – you admit there's nothing higher than the sky, however it covers the earth?

- 40 **Alphius** Admitted.

Curio And nothing deeper than the centre of the earth?

Alphius Quite right.

Curio Of all species of things, what's the heaviest?

Alphius Gold, I suppose.

Curio On this matter I disagree with you emphatically.

5 **Alphius** Do you know anything heavier than gold?

Curio Yes, a great deal heavier.

Alphius Well, then, *you* take a turn at teaching *me*, since you know what I confess I don't know.

Curio Isn't what forced those fiery spirits from the height of heaven down
10 to the depths of hell – for this is thought to be the centre of the earth – necessarily the heaviest thing of all?

Alphius Granted – but what was that?

Curio Sin,³⁴ which also sank human souls, called by Virgil 'the radiance of ethereal air,'³⁵ to the same depth.

15 **Alphius** If you like to go in for that sort of reasoning, I admit both gold and lead are of feathery lightness when compared with sin.

Curio How then will it be possible for those weighed down by this burden to fly up to heaven?

Alphius Indeed I don't see how.

20 **Curio** But men getting ready to race or jump don't only rid themselves of any burden but even make themselves a bit lighter by holding their breath; and yet for *this* race and leap, by which we're carried to heaven, we neglect to throw off what is heavier than all stone and lead.

Alphius We'd get rid of it if we had a grain of common sense.

NOTES

1 Curio suggests *cura* 'care,' for he is both thoughtful and inquisitive; in the best sense of the word, 'curious.' This name had been used in the original edition of the *Formulae* (November 1518) 23. 'Alphius,' if adapted from ἀλφειν, means here 'busy,' 'energetic' about getting knowledge. Cf *Odyssey* 6.8; 13.261.

2 Addition of the 'monosyllabic name' *sus* (pig) gives *curiosus*. See *Adagia* 1 i 40: *Sus Minervam* 'The sow (teaches) Minerva' on the presumptuous folly of an ignoramus trying to compete with a wise person or (as Erasmus adds) to rival Venus in beauty.

3 *Adagia* IV vi 99. See Horace *Satires* 1.9.20–1.

4 Depending on the context, 'antipodes' in this colloquy signifies either a region or the supposed inhabitants. On early controversies about the existence of the antipodes and the question of life there see Andrew D. White *History of the Warfare between Science and Theology* 2 vols (New York 1899) 1 102–8. Augustine did not deny that there is a side of the globe diametrically opposite ours, but did deny that it is inhabited by creatures who 'walk with their feet opposite ours.' For such an absurd conjecture violates the evidence of

Scripture (*De civitate Dei* 16.9 PL 41 487–8). When a spokesman for Tyndale cited Lactantius *Divinae institutiones* 3.24 (PL 6 425–8) on the folly of believing in the existence of the antipodes, More reminded him of the voyages of Magellan and his company, who had circumnavigated the globe (1519–22), proving that they did exist (*Dialogue Concerning Heresies* [1529] Yale cwm 6 part 1 66, part 2 618).

5 'All movement is either natural or unnatural, and . . . the movement which is unnatural to one body is natural to another – as, for instance, is the case with the upward and downward movements, which are natural and unnatural to fire and earth respectively. It necessarily follows that circular movement, being unnatural to these bodies, is the natural movement of some other' (*De caelo* 1.2 269a32–269b2).

6 *motu violento aut animali*. 'Forcible' means caused by something external to it. Latin *animalis* in this context has its original meaning of 'animate,' 'living.' Animate bodies contain a principle of movement within themselves. The point of Alphius' next remarks is that heavy things fall and light ones rise because of their intrinsic nature. 'Everything that is in motion must be moved by something' is an Aristotelian axiom (*Physics* 7.1 241b24). In animate bodies, which can move themselves, this 'something' is an intrinsic principle; in non-living things movement is simply a 'natural' or involuntary activity (*De caelo* 2.2 284b25–34).

7 A natural body or element (fire, air, water, earth) can move in three ways: up or down from or to the centre, or in circular motion. These are what Aristotle calls 'simple motions.' Since circular motion is unnatural to the four elements, there must be another element to which it is natural because it is continuous and eternal. That body is the so-called 'fifth element,' which is perfect and more divine than the four known in the terrestrial world (*De caelo* 1.2 268b11–269b17).

Heaviness and lightness – in relative and not absolute terms – move naturally down to the centre or upward away from it. The heavy moves downward, the light upward to realize their inherent potentiality. To ask why 'is the same as to ask why the healable, when moved and changed *qua* healable, attains health and not whiteness' (*De caelo* 4.3 310b16–19).

8 Perhaps alluding to Erasmus' formidable housekeeper, Margaret. See introduction to 'The Poetic Feast' 390.

9 *De caelo* 4.2 (308b13–28)

10 For Alphius' explanation here see *De caelo* 1.8 276a22–30: 'A thing moves naturally to a place in which it rests without constraint, and rests naturally in a place to which it moves without constraint. On the other hand, a thing moves by constraint to a place in which it rests by constraint, and rests by constraint in a place to which it moves by constraint. Further, if a given movement is due to constraint, its contrary is natural. If, then, it is by constraint that earth moves from a certain place to the centre here, its movement from here to there will be natural, and if earth from there rests here without constraint, its movement hither will be natural.' With the comparison compare Shakespeare 2 *Henry IV*:

And as the thing that's heavy in itself
Upon enforcement flies with greatest speed,
So did our men, heavy in Hotspur's loss,

Lend to this weight such lightness with their fear
 That arrows fled not swifter toward their aim
 Than did our soldiers, aiming at their safety,
 Fly from the field. (1.1.119–25)

- 11 In book 6 of his *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer* (1532–3), More tells a diverting story of how he tried to explain to his wife that the earth is in the centre of the world, and the centre of this earth 'the most inward place of the whole world,' and also why what is heavy falls and what is light rises. Here too we meet the answer – to reassure doubters – that if a hole were bored through the earth and a millstone thrown down from above, the stone would finally rest there in the centre of the earth; and even if the hole went further than the centre, the stone would not fall through, since that would mean ascending, which is impossible for the stone. More's explanation was in vain. Dame Alice, dismissing it as nonsense, counters with a question of her own. Suppose a spindle with a whorl (flywheel to steady its motion) ten miles thick. If a hole were bored through the whorl and a millstone thrown into the hole, would the stone stop at the centre? Not at all, as he would discover if he stood five miles beneath! For the anecdote see Yale cwm 8 part 2 604–6 and note in 8 part 3 1618–19.
- The first three books of the *Confutation* were issued in one volume in 1532, the remaining five in 1533 (London: William Rastell). As both the volume with the anecdote and Erasmus' 'A Problem' came out in the early months of 1533, More could hardly have seen this colloquy, or Erasmus the *Confutation*, before writing about the earth's centre. More's last extant letter to Erasmus (Ep 2831) alludes to Tyndale but says nothing about the *Confutation* or the *Colloquies*. The coincidence of their writing about the earth's centre at the same time proves only that the subject was nothing novel. The question about boring through the centre had been asked by others, for example by the medieval encyclopaedist Vincent of Beauvais (1190?–1264), whose answer was the same as Erasmus' and More's. Nevertheless images of heavy and light and earth's centre as resting place, like so many other Aristotelian legacies, survived as powerful commonplaces in human affairs and as sources of provocative imagery in literature and art. In the core of hell, where Satan abides, Dante and Virgil, after descending feet first on his body, can go down no further. Here at the centre of gravity they turn themselves around, or rather topsy-turvy, and begin to ascend to the antipodes (*Inferno* 34:76–139). In *Romeo and Juliet*, when Romeo is first attracted to Juliet, he exclaims:

Can I go forward when my heart is here?
 Turn back, dull earth, and find thy center out. (2.1.1–2)

But earth's centre (Juliet here) can be an image not only of the resting place of joy (as it is, uniquely, in the verses just quoted) but of mortality and the 'heaviness' of sin that we read of in the concluding lines of this colloquy. Thus in Donne's *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* (1624) 2, Meditation: 'Earth is the center of my Bodie, Heaven is the center of my Soule; these two are the naturall places of those two; but those goe not to these two in an equall pace: My body falls downe without pushing, my Soule does not go up without pulling: Ascension is my Soules pace and measure, but precipitation my bodies: and

even Angells, whose home is Heaven, and who are winged too, yet had a Ladder to goe to Heaven, by steps.'

- 12 'Earth in motion, whether in a mass or in fragments, necessarily continues to move until it occupies the centre equally every way, the less being forced to equalize itself by the greater owing to the forward drive of the impulse' (*De caelo* 2.14 297b10–13).
- 13 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 36.125–30 on magnets does not include this example. Cf n24 below.
- 14 Fire is hot and dry, air hot and moist ('a sort of aqueous vapour'); water is cold and moist, earth cold and dry (Aristotle *De generatione et corruptione* 2.3 330b3–5). Cf Erasmus *Ratio verae theologiae* LB v 88f.
- 15 Here *concretio*; *condensatio* is rare and non-classical.
- 16 *Adagia* I x 30
- 17 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.224 remarks that sea water is heavier than fresh water.
- 18 So Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.209
- 19 *Olympians* 1.1–2
- 20 Cf Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.234 and *Parabola*e CWE 23 246:26–8.
- 21 ἄβαπτος; used again in *Ecclesiastes* LB v 933A. The meaning intended in each passage is clear: 'unsinkable' here and 'unbaptized' in LB v 933A; but ἄβαπτος (of iron 'not tempered') instead of ἀβάπτιστος is uncommon for 'not baptized.'
- 22 Since the date of this incident is unknown and we are told nothing more about the person who spoke of the aloe wood, it is hard to guess who is meant. Mountjoy perhaps, or Linacre, who as a physician would be entitled to an opinion on poisons.
- 23 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 27:14–20 has much to say about aloe's medicinal uses but nothing specific about its efficacy in expelling poisons or its solidity or lightness.
- 24 See *Adagia* I vii 56, where Erasmus quotes some lines from Pliny *Naturalis historia* 36.126–7.
- 25 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 24.1
- 26 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.235; cf *Parabola*e CWE 23 246:29–31. Thus Erasmus describes his innate attraction to literature (Allen Epp 23:37–42, 1110:1–19 / CWE Epp 23:39–45, 1110:3–23).
- 27 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 33.99–100. Quicksilver is mercury.
- 28 See 'Sympathy' n100 and n17 above.
- 29 *flotae*; more correctly *flutae* as in Varro *Res rusticae* 2.6.2 and Columella 8.17.8. Floaters are identified with morays; see D'Arcy W. Thompson *A Glossary of Greek Fishes* (London 1947) 162, 203.
- 30 Pliny *Naturalis historia* 2.226 and 5.72
- 31 In 'The New Mother' the young mother is told that boys who overeat have dull wits and poor memories (n50), but here 'spirits' are said to be enlarged by food and drink. The connection between lightness and merriment, heaviness and sadness, is a conviction of proverbial wisdom. 'A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken' (Prov 15:13) Rabelais repeats that a man is 'more terrestrial' and heavy when fasting (*Gargantua and Pantagruel* 4.65), adding that some people contend a dead man weighs more than a live one. These vulgar errors are examined in Sir Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia epidemica* (1646) 4.7.

- 32 An ironical proverb about irrational and unnecessary fear (*Adagia* 1 v 64). Aristotle (*Metaphysics* 5.23 1023a19–21) alludes to the myth that the heavens are upheld by Atlas (cf Hesiod *Theogony* 517 and Plato *Phaedo* 99c). Suppose Atlas tired of bearing the world? A more sophisticated speculation was that of the philosopher Anaxagoras who, according to Diogenes Laertius 2.12, predicted that if the velocity of the firmament slowed down, the sky would fall. Not to worry, Horace advises (*Odes* 3.3.1–8).
- 33 *Odyssey* 15.329, 17.565 on the iron sky. *Iliad* 17.425 and *Odyssey* 3.2 call it brazen.
- 34 As a weight or burden, sin is a biblical trope, as in Heb 12:1 'let us lay aside every weight' (*pondus Vulg*). In *Dante's Purgatorio* 10–12, the proud are bowed down beneath the weight of heavy stones. The gravity of sin, literally and figuratively, has ever been a common theme of Christian preaching. For 'no weight is heavier than the burden of sin' (Erasmus *Enarratio in psalmum xxxiii* LB V 383D).
- 35 *Aeneid* 6.747

THE EPICUREAN

Epicureus

First printed in the March 1533 edition.

Like many other colloquies, this one begins with a question, which is then clarified, analysed, and answered. The question concerns the 'ends' of goods and evils. Accordingly the inquiry produces a critique of Epicurean ethics and comparison and contrast with Christian teachings and principles: a topic appropriate as a conclusion to the *Colloquies*. For obvious reasons, Erasmus' approach to such a subject lacks the jocularly of some earlier colloquies, but it has the familiar blend of pertinence, amiability, and informality we expect of him. The expositor of Epicureanism, Hedonius, with customary Erasmian conviction and language, tries to persuade Spudaeus, apparently with success, that if hedonism is judged from a Christian perspective and with Christian insights, Christianity will be seen as the superior source and arbiter of pleasure.

Another typically Erasmian procedure is to begin with a text, here Cicero's *De finibus bonorum et malorum*. By using a book on ends at the end of his series of dialogues, Erasmus is not simply playing on the word *finis*. He resorts to an ancient classic by a favourite author because with him that is a common way of introducing ethical or political topics of importance in modern life: looking first at what the great ideas, books, or philosophical systems of classical antiquity thought on these or comparable themes, then examining them critically. Much of his life and work was devoted to expounding classical civilization in this manner.

Brief allusion to Stoic and Peripatetic ethics occurs in 'The Epicurean,' but the central and almost exclusive subject is Epicurean hedonism and in what senses, if any, Christianity is 'Epicurean.' Erasmus has nothing to say on Epicurean physics, the atomic theory borrowed by Epicurus from Democritus, but is interested only in the typical Epicurean ethical doctrine, inherited from Aristippus, that immediate pleasure is the sole good. The dialogue is too brief to allow long dissertations on nuances of philosophical vocabulary, but long enough for Erasmus to present and defend his main proposition, stated by Hedonius at the outset: 'There are no people more Epicurean than godly Christians' (1075:29). This claim, we learn, depends on agreement that 'true' pleasure is virtue, righteousness. No one lives happily unless he lives righteously. The true Christian is the person who lives most righteously. And since the Epicurean criterion of goodness is pleasure, the conclusion must be that the Christian is the true Epicurean.

Spudaeus' initial doubts about such a claim are not surprising when we consider the persistence through the centuries of 'Epicurean' as synonymous with 'libertine,' 'sensualist,' 'godless.' In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, Epicureanism received more attention from philosophers and other scholars than it had known since antiquity. Intermittent debate on the meaning and merits of the Epicurean doctrine of pleasure began with Lorenzo Valla's dialogue *De voluptate* (1431, but after 1533 called *De vero bono*; some parts revised in 1444–9). He presents arguments for Stoic, Epicurean, and Christian ethics, though the terms 'Stoic' and 'Epicurean' are used more loosely than in ancient writings. The defender of Epicureanism contends, against the Stoics, that what is natural is good and that pleasure is the greatest good. This means physical as well as intellectual pleasures: he denounces celibacy and approves of sexual liberty and even, the text implies, adultery; Plato was right to establish community of wives in his state. In the third book the apologist for Christianity, presumably voicing Valla's own opinions, concurs with the argument that what is natural is good and therefore pleasure is a good, and furthermore that the greatest good and hence the greatest pleasure is virtue. But he does not stop there, for otherwise the essential message of Christianity would be ignored. Epicureanism thinks gods are useless to men. Stoics believe all that need be said of or for virtue is that virtue is its own reward. Christianity believes in future judgment and believes the righteous will have felicity in heaven. Virtue is necessary, but the pleasure it brings in this life is not the final or greatest good; that happiness is to come in another life.

In the judgment of most but not all readers, this conclusion is Valla's own belief. A difficulty for sceptical readers was that his praise of nature and the natural contains paradoxes and that he writes strongly against asceticism, whether pagan or Christian. He prefers Epicureanism to Stoicism, as being closer to Christianity. Erasmus' Hedonius in the colloquy is of the same opinion. Christian doctrine, based on revelation (not philosophy), has its own unique authority. Christ, not nature, is its guide.

Valla's *De voluptate* is a complex, powerful, sometimes audacious work to which justice cannot be done in a few paragraphs. That Erasmus, who knew all of Valla's writings, would have been unaffected by it is most unlikely. He could not have failed to appreciate its rhetorical force and its learning or its concluding pages on the felicities of paradise; pages that should be compared with those at the end of *Moriae encomium* on the mystical joys of Christians.

Valla's *Opera omnia* (Basel 1540) were reprinted (Turin 1962) with a preface by E. Garin. The most useful edition of *De voluptate* now is that of A. Kent Hieatt and Maristella Lorch (New York 1977), which has the Latin text and English translation on facing pages, with an introduction and notes.

On Valla and this dialogue consult also P.O. Kristeller *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance* (Stanford 1964; repr 1966) 19–36.

The most popular and significant of sixteenth-century writings on the philosophy of pleasure was not a treatise but a work of fiction, book 2 of More's *Utopia* (1516) edited and translated by Edward Surtz in Yale cwm 4. *Utopia* does not contain the words 'Epicurus' or 'Epicurean,' which More evidently and perhaps wisely chose to avoid, yet it describes a society that lives rationally and successfully by following pleasure as the operative principle of life. Utopians are hedonists in More's sense but are not Epicureans whom Epicurus would accept. They believe in the immortality of the soul, divine providence, and future judgment, all of which Epicurus rejected. Nor is their society by any means perfect, if we accept the account by Hythloday, the narrator; but it is far more humane and more secure than the European societies with which we are invited to compare it. Utopians think happiness is man's supreme good, and the best part of happiness is pleasure. They endure hardships in the hope of future happiness. Of earthly pleasures the highest form is the practice of virtue in a life lived in accordance with nature. The end or goal of virtue is eternal felicity after death. Utopians agree with Stoics and Epicureans in preferring higher to lower pleasures, a trait which may account for their addiction to lectures, for they take nothing more seriously than adult education. But as regards religion, providence, and future judgment, they are at the opposite extreme from Epicurus. They are rationalists, but theistic rationalists. They have had a variety of religions, but most agree in belief in one supreme being. Latterly, after hearing from Hythloday and his companions about the miracles and teachings of Christ, many of them have become followers of the gospel, though nobody compelled them to do so; in *Utopia* there is freedom of choice in such matters. On their daily life and social institutions see further Surtz' *The Praise of Pleasure* (Cambridge, Mass 1957) and *The Praise of Wisdom* (Chicago 1957).

In Erasmus' 'The Epicurean,' Hedonius' argument – that classical and Christian values need not be thought irreconcilable – carries an implied condition that pagan values must be tried and tested by Christian knowledge before their worth can be accepted. At the same time an honest effort to recognize and respect what is good in classical philosophies must be made. An example of such consideration is the passage in 'The Godly Feast' in which speakers whose Erasmian sympathies are unmistakable argue that despite its paganism classical literature should not be rejected (192:5–194:36). A properly educated Christian ought to be able to discriminate between what is harmful and what is profitable for Christian readers. This is a subject Erasmus had to

deal with from time to time; for example, in *Antibarbari* and *De ratione studii*. See CWE 23 xxix–xxxii, 55–61; CWE 24 663–4.

Many years before writing 'The Epicurean,' Erasmus had invoked the name of Epicurus in chapter 11 of his *De contemptu mundi* (written, he says, in his twentieth year or c 1486), a tract in the form of a letter written by a monk to his nephew, commending monastic life. 'Our whole way of life is Epicurean,' he says, for we are content with little, have no worldly ambitions, and our consciences are clear, as Epicurus advises (LB V 1257A–1258B / CWE 66 165–7).

On other Italian humanists interested in the 'rehabilitation' of Epicurus and his hedonism, among them Poggio Bracciolini, Francesco Filelfo, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Cristoforo Landino, and Marsilio Ficino, see the survey by D.C. Allen 'The Rehabilitation of Epicurus and His Theory of Pleasure in the Early Renaissance' *Studies in Philology* 41 (1944) 1–15. For additional studies of Epicureanism in the Renaissance consult Marie Delcourt and Marcelle Derwa 'Trois aspects humanistes de l'épicurisme chrétien' in *Colloquium Erasmianum* (Mons 1968) 119–33 and R. Bultot's excellent article on book 11 of *De contemptu mundi*, with some pages on 'The Epicurean' also, 'Erasmus, Epicure et le *De Contemptu Mundi*' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* II 205–38. For other sixteenth-century texts and commentaries on Epicurus and Epicureanism see F. Joukovsky 'Quelques sources épicuriennes au xvi^e siècle' BHR 31 (1969) 7–25. Two books by Charles Trinkaus, *Adversity's Noblemen* (New York 1940) and particularly *In Our Image and Likeness* 2 vols (Chicago 1970) are valuable comparative studies in Renaissance philosophy.

The first known English translation of Erasmus' *Epicureus*, by Philip Gerrard (London 1545; STC 10460) survives in two copies, one of which has a few textual variants. This translation is carefully edited, along with an anonymous English version of *Funus*, by Robert R. Allen (Chicago 1969). Gerrard was a minor official in the household of Prince Edward, later Edward VI.

HEDONIUS, SPUDAEUS¹

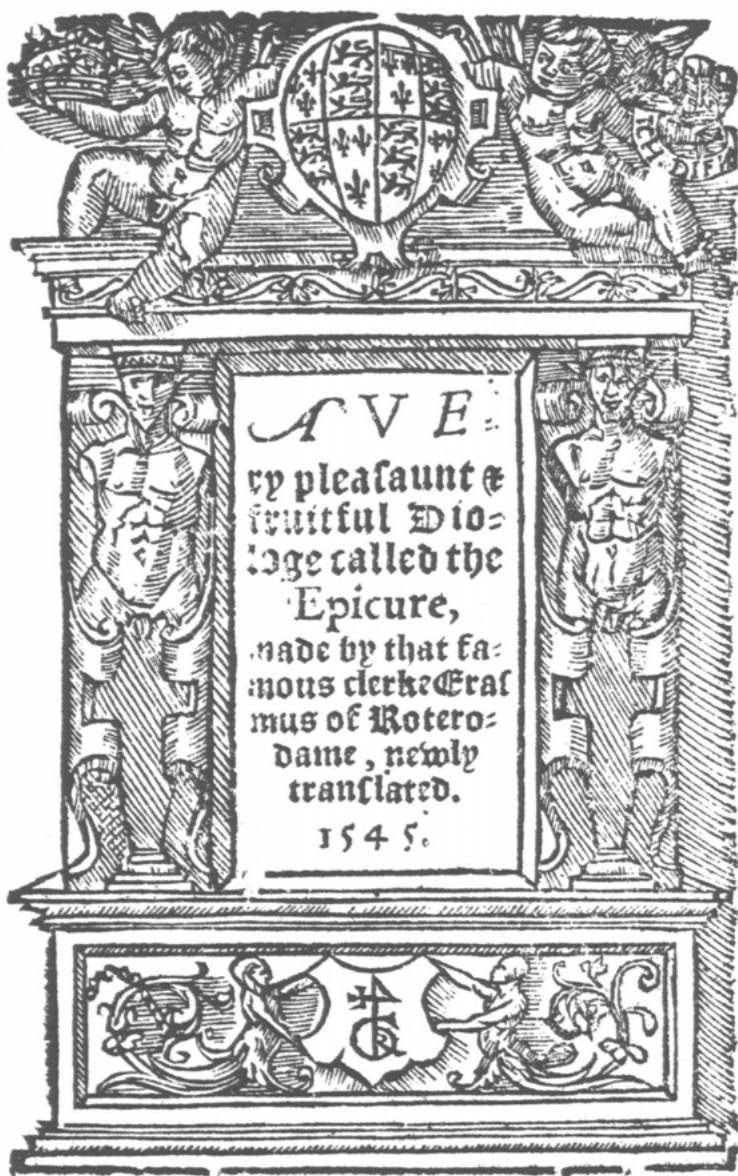
Hedonius What's my Spudaeus hunting, bent double over his book, mumbling something or other to himself?

Spudaeus True, I'm hunting, Hedonius – but only hunting.

5 **Hedonius** What's the book you have in your lap?

Spudaeus Cicero's dialogue *On the Ends of Goods*.²

Hedonius How much better it would be to seek the beginnings of goods rather than their ends!³



Title-page of the 1545 English translation of *Epicureus*
London: Richard Grafton
By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library

Spudaeus But Marcus Tullius⁴ calls the 'end' of good the 'complete, perfect good,' which, if one attains it, leaves nothing to be desired.

Hedonius That's a work famous for learning and eloquence; but you don't imagine, do you, that in return for your trouble you've discovered truth?

Spudaeus I've profited to this extent, I think: that I'm even more doubtful about ends than I was before.

Hedonius Farmers are the ones to dispute about boundaries or ends.⁵

Spudaeus I can't get over the fact that on so important a subject there was so much conflicting opinion among such eminent men.

Hedonius No wonder, because error is prolific while truth is single.⁶ Missing the head and source of the matter, they all rant and rave. But which doctrine strikes you as closer to the mark?⁷

Spudaeus When I hear Marcus Tullius opposing them, every one displeases me. Again, when I hear him defending them, straightway I suspend judgment.⁸ However, in my opinion the Stoics come closest to the truth; next, the Peripatetics.

Hedonius But no school attracts me more than the Epicurean.

Spudaeus Yet none is more universally detested.⁹

Hedonius Let's disregard bad reputations – Epicurus was whatever you please – and consider the matter in itself. Human happiness, he holds, is the product of pleasure, and he deems that life most blessed which has the most pleasure and the least sorrow.

Spudaeus So he does.

Hedonius What judgment could have been more holy than this?

Spudaeus On the contrary, everybody protests that this is the language of a beast,¹⁰ not a human being.

Hedonius I know, but they're mistaken about the names of things. In plain truth, there are no people more Epicurean than godly Christians.

Spudaeus Christians are closer to Cynics, because they wear themselves out by fasting and bewailing their sins.¹¹ Either they're poor or their kindness towards the needy brings them to poverty; they're oppressed by the stronger and scorned by the multitude. If pleasure brings happiness, this sort of life seems as far as possible from pleasure.

Hedonius Do you accept the authority of Plautus?

Spudaeus If what he says is true.

Hedonius Then attend to the rascally slave's saying, a wiser one than all the paradoxes of the Stoics.¹²

Spudaeus I'm waiting.

Hedonius 'Nothing is more wretched than a bad conscience.'¹³

Spudaeus A saying I don't reject; but what's your inference?

Hedonius If nothing is more wretched than a bad conscience, it follows that nothing is more blessed than a good one.¹⁴

Spudaeus The inference is correct, but where in the world will you find this conscience free of wrong?

5 **Hedonius** By 'wrong' I mean whatever destroys amity between God and man.

Spudaeus And from this kind of wrong very few, I think, are free.

Hedonius For my part, I regard those who have been cleansed as free of it. Those who have washed away their stains by the lye of tears and the soap of
10 repentance or the fire of charity are not only unharmed by sins but the sins often pave the way to a greater good.

Spudaeus Soap and lye I'm acquainted with, but that spots are removed by fire I never heard.

Hedonius But if you go to silversmiths' shops you'll see gold refined by
15 fire. There's a kind of flax, too, that doesn't burn when thrown into the fire but glitters more brightly than any liquid could and on that account is known as 'live flax.'¹⁵

Spudaeus Really, you present us with a paradox topping all the paradoxes of the Stoics.¹⁶ Do those whom Christ called 'blessed' because they mourn¹⁷
20 live a life of pleasure?

Hedonius To the world they appear to mourn, but in fact they're joyful and live agreeably, 'smeared all over with honey,' as the saying goes;¹⁸ so that compared with these, Sardanapalus, Philoxenus, Apicius,¹⁹ or any other famous voluptuary experiences a sad and miserable life.

25 **Spudaeus** You tell me novelties, but they're hard to believe.

Hedonius Test them and you'll say over and over again that everything I've told you was true. Nevertheless I'll try my best to make it even more convincing.

Spudaeus Go ahead.

30 **Hedonius** I'll do so if you'll concede something first.

Spudaeus Only ask what's fair.

Hedonius I'll pay a profit if you'll put up the capital.

Spudaeus Go on.

Hedonius First of all, you'll grant, I suppose, that there's some difference
35 between body and soul.²⁰

Spudaeus As much as between heaven and earth, mortal and immortal.

Hedonius Next, that false goods are not to be reckoned among goods.²¹

Spudaeus No more than shadows are to be considered substances,²² or magicians' illusions²³ or the mockeries of dreams held for true.

40 **Hedonius** So far I'm pleased with your answers. You'll grant this, too, I suppose: that true pleasure befalls only a sane person.

Spudaeus Of course. A blar-eyed man doesn't enjoy the sun; a feverish man who has lost his taste doesn't care for wine.

Hedonius Unless I'm mistaken, Epicurus himself wouldn't embrace pleasure that entailed agony much greater and more lasting.

5 **Spudaeus** I don't think any sensible person would.

Hedonius And you won't deny that God is the supreme good,²⁴ than which nothing is more beauteous, more lovely, more dear.

Spudaeus Nobody will deny that unless he's more savage than the Cyclopes.²⁵ What follows?

10 **Hedonius** You've already granted that none live more enjoyably than those who live righteously,²⁶ none more wretchedly and miserably than those who live wickedly.

Spudaeus Then I granted more than I thought.

Hedonius But, as Plato says, what's properly given away you can't demand back.²⁷

15 **Spudaeus** Go on.

Hedonius Doesn't a puppy that's spoiled and overfed, sleeps on a soft bed, and plays and romps incessantly live enjoyably?

Spudaeus It does.

20 **Hedonius** Would you desire such a life?

Spudaeus Perish the thought! Not unless I wished to be a dog instead of a man.

Hedonius Then you admit that the principal pleasures come from the mind, as from a fountain-head?

25 **Spudaeus** Evidently.

Hedonius For so great is the power of mind that frequently it takes away the feeling of physical pain. Sometimes it renders pleasant what is in itself bitter.

Spudaeus This we witness every day in lovers, to whom long vigils and sleeping at the beloved's gates on winter nights are sweet.

Hedonius Now consider: if there's so much power in mortal love, which is something we have in common with bulls and dogs, how much stronger must be that heavenly love proceeding from the spirit of Christ. So great is its power that even death – than which nothing is more dreadful – is made pleasing.²⁸

35 **Spudaeus** What others may feel privately I don't know, but unquestionably those who live a strictly religious life miss many pleasures.²⁹

Hedonius Which ones?

Spudaeus They don't grow rich, win honours, feast, dance, sing, reek of perfume,³⁰ laugh, play.

40 **Hedonius** You shouldn't have mentioned riches and honours, which bring not a pleasant life but rather one of care and anxiety. As for the rest, let's

discuss the ones sought most eagerly by those who are bent on enjoying life. Don't you see every day drunkards, fools, and madmen laughing and dancing?

Spudaeus I do.

5 **Hedonius** You don't think they enjoy themselves, do you?

Spudaeus I'd wish that sort of enjoyment to my enemies.

Hedonius Why?

Spudaeus Because it's madness.

Hedonius Then would you prefer to bend over a book, hungry, than enjoy
10 yourself in that way?

Spudaeus Yes. I'd much rather dig ditches.

Hedonius For between a rich man³¹ and a drunken man the sole difference is that the one's madness is cured by sleep; the other scarcely recovers even with physicians' care. A natural fool differs from a brute beast only in bodily
15 appearance; but the brutes nature produces are less wretched than those stupefied by monstrous lusts.

Spudaeus I admit that.

Hedonius Well, you don't regard as sober or sane, do you, those who for the sake of shadows and illusions of pleasures neglect the real pleasures of the
20 mind and bring real torments upon themselves?

Spudaeus No, I don't.

Hedonius They're not drunk with wine, to be sure, but with love, anger, avarice, craving for power, and other sinful lusts far more dangerous than drunkenness from wine. Syrus in the comedy, after sleeping off the sup
25 of wine he had drunk, talks sober sense;³² but how reluctantly a mind drunk with sinful desire recovers! For how many years do love, wrath, hatred, lust, gluttony, and obsessive ambition beset the mind! How many men do we see who from youth to feeble old age never sober up, never recover from the intoxication of desire for power, of greed, lust, and
30 debauchery!

Spudaeus I know too many of that kind.

Hedonius You've granted that false goods are not to be reckoned among goods.

Spudaeus I don't take it back.

35 **Hedonius** Nor is something a true pleasure unless produced by the true.

Spudaeus Admitted.

Hedonius Therefore what the common crowd hunt by fair means or foul³³ aren't true goods.

Spudaeus I don't think they are.

40 **Hedonius** If they were true goods, they would befall only good men and would render happy those whom they befall. Now what is pleasure? What

comes not from true goods but from deceitful shadows of goods doesn't seem to be true pleasure, does it?

Spudaeus Not at all.

Hedonius But pleasure causes us to live enjoyably.

5 **Spudaeus** Of course.

Hedonius Then no one lives enjoyably unless he lives righteously; that is, enjoys true goods. Only righteousness renders a man blessed – only righteousness,³⁴ which alone reconciles God, the source of the supreme good, to man.

10 **Spudaeus** I'm in entire agreement.

Hedonius Now just see how very far from pleasure are those who openly pursue nothing but pleasures. In the first place, their minds are stained and corrupted by the leaven of lusts, so that if anything sweet does happen to them it turns sour at once, as water from a polluted well necessarily has a
15 bad taste. Secondly, there's no true pleasure except what is comprehended by a sound mind. Nothing is more agreeable to an angry man than vengeance, but this pleasure turns to sorrow as soon as the disease leaves his mind.

Spudaeus No objection.

Hedonius Finally, those pleasures are taken from false goods; whence it
20 follows that they are deceptions also. What would you say, moreover, were you to see a victim of magic eat, drink, dance, laugh, and clap his hands when none of the things he believes he sees was really present?³⁵

Spudaeus I'd say he was mad and miserable both.

Hedonius I've witnessed such a sight at times. There was a priest skilled in
25 magic –

Spudaeus He hadn't learned *that* from Holy Scripture!

Hedonius On the contrary, from the most unholy scriptures. Some court ladies used to pester him for an invitation to dinner, reproaching his
30 meanness and stinginess. He gave in and issued an invitation. They came with empty stomachs, in order to dine with the better appetite. They sat down to dinner: no lack of rich dishes, as it seemed. They took their fill and when the feast was over thanked their host and went home. But soon they began to feel hungry. They wondered what this marvel meant – being hungry and thirsty just after a sumptuous meal. At last the truth came out,
35 and the joke was on them.

Spudaeus Served them right, too. They'd have done better to satisfy their hunger with a bit of breakfast at home than to entertain themselves with empty illusions.

Hedonius But far more ridiculous is it, in my opinion, for the common herd
40 to embrace empty shadows of goods for true goods and to delight in these deceptions which end not in a laugh but in eternal grief.

Spudaeus The more I reflect on it, the more sense this seems to make.

Hedonius Come, now, let's grant that sometimes things which are not true goods acquire the name of pleasure. You wouldn't call mead sweet if it contained much more aloes than honey?³⁶

5 **Spudaeus** I wouldn't call it sweet if it were one-third aloes.

Hedonius Or would you like a bad case of mange for the sake of the pleasure of scratching?³⁷

Spudaeus Not if I were in my right mind.

Hedonius Figure out for yourself, then, how much bitterness is mingled
10 with those pleasures, falsely so called, produced by shameless love, unlawful passion, excessive wining and dining – not to mention the worst of all: torments of conscience, enmity with God, expectation of eternal punishment. I ask you: which sort among these 'pleasures' does not bring in its train also a vast throng of external evils?

15 **Spudaeus** What evils?

Hedonius Again, let's omit avarice, thirst for power, anger, pride, envy, which are sad evils in themselves; let's consider those things especially recommended in the name of enjoyment. When fever, headache, colic, fuzzy-mindedness, disgrace, loss of memory, vomiting, ruined digestion,
20 and palsy follow too much drinking, would even Epicurus think that a pleasure worth seeking?

Spudaeus He'd advise us to shun it.

Hedonius When young men get from whoring the new disease now euphemistically³⁸ called the 'Neapolitan itch'³⁹ – and generally they do get it
25 – through which they are so often doomed to a living death, always carrying a living corpse about,⁴⁰ don't they seem to 'Epicurize' beautifully?

Spudaeus Not at all; they seem to be looking for a 'cure.'⁴¹

Hedonius Now weigh the pleasure against the pain: would you want the agony of toothache for as long as the pleasure of drinking or whoring lasted?

30 **Spudaeus** Well, I'd prefer to do without both, for to buy pleasure with pain is not getting but spending. In this respect the state of painlessness⁴² Cicero ventured to call 'indolence'⁴³ is better.

Hedonius Consequently the stimulus of unlawful pleasure, in addition to being far less intense than the torture it causes, lasts but a short time,⁴⁴
35 whereas the pox you get torments you all your life and often kills you before you die.

Spudaeus Epicurus would not acknowledge such disciples.

Hedonius Poverty, a heavy and miserable burden, is the constant companion of gluttony; paralysis, palsy, inflammation of the eyes, blindness, and leprosy
40 – and not only these – of intemperate sexual indulgence. A strange bargain, is it not? And you wouldn't care to exchange a pleasure neither true nor

genuine – and brief besides – for so many more serious and lasting ills, would you?

Spudaeus Even if no torture resulted, one who exchanged jewels for glass⁴⁵ would seem to be a very foolish bargainer.

- 5 **Hedonius** You mean one who sacrifices the true goods of the mind to the deceitful pleasures of the body?

Spudaeus Yes, that's my opinion.

- Hedonius** Now let's resume our stricter calculation. Neither fever nor poverty always accompanies gluttony; and the new pox or paralysis doesn't
10 always accompany intemperate sexuality. But agony of conscience – and we've agreed there's nothing worse – is always the companion of unlawful pleasure.

- Spudaeus** What's more, it sometimes runs ahead and pierces the heart in the midst of pleasure. Yet there are people who, you would say, lack this
15 feeling.

- Hedonius** The worse for them. Who wouldn't prefer to feel pain than have a body numbed and without feeling? But as in some their intemperance in pleasures (drunkenness, for example) or addiction to vices or a certain callousness destroys the sense of evil during youth, when old age arrives
20 and when – besides the innumerable discomforts accumulated by the sins of earlier life – death, which no mortal escapes, stands close at hand to terrify,⁴⁶ the more insensible a man has been throughout his life, the more excruciatingly his conscience torments him. For now his mind is alert whether he wishes it to be or not. Though old age is by its very nature
25 unhappy,⁴⁷ exposed as it is to many natural discomforts, how much more miserable and even disgraceful is it for one oppressed by a bad conscience! Wining and dining, love affairs, song and dance, and other things delightful to a young man are bitter to an old one. Age has no other prop but the recollection of a virtuous life and the hope of a better life to come.⁴⁸ These
30 are the two staffs by which old age is supported. If you take them away and substitute the double burden of remembrance of a life ill spent and despair of future happiness, what beast can be imagined more wretched or afflicted?

Spudaeus I see none, not even an old, worn-out horse.⁴⁹

- Hedonius** In brief, then, 'The Phrygians are wise too late,'⁵⁰ and it is truly
35 said, 'The end of mirth is heaviness,'⁵¹ and 'There is . . . no joy above the joy of the heart,'⁵² 'A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance,'⁵³ 'A broken spirit drieth the bones';⁵⁴ likewise 'All the days of the afflicted are evil,' that is, distressed and wretched, 'but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.'⁵⁵

- 40 **Spudaeus** Wise are they, therefore, who make their fortune early and gather provision for coming old age.

Hedonius Mystical Scripture⁵⁶ does not descend so low as to measure human happiness by the goods of fortune. In the last analysis, one is extraordinarily poor who is destitute of all virtue and owes both body and soul to Death.⁵⁷

5 **Spudaeus** Death's an implacable collector indeed.

Hedonius The truly rich man is one who has God's favour. What should he fear if he has such a defender? Men? The power of all men in the world against God is less than that of a gnat against an Indian elephant. Death? For good men it is the way to eternal bliss. Hell? But the righteous man says
10 confidently to God: 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.'⁵⁸ Why should he fear devils, having in his heart him whom devils dread? For that a righteous man's mind is the temple of God, Scripture, which cannot be contradicted,⁵⁹ declares in more than one passage.⁶⁰

15 **Spudaeus** I don't see how these arguments could be refuted, though for the most part they seem far from common sense.

Hedonius How so?

Spudaeus Because according to your reasoning, any Franciscan would lead a more pleasurable life than a man rich in money, honours, and, in short,
20 luxuries of every kind.

Hedonius Add a king's sceptre if you like; add the pontifical crown and make it a hundredfold instead of triple; only take away a good conscience and I'll be bold to say that this Franciscan, barefoot, girded with a knotted cord, poorly and cheaply dressed, worn by fasting, vigils, and labours,
25 without a farthing in the world, lives more delightfully – provided only that he has a good conscience – than six hundred Sardanapaluses rolled into one.⁶¹

Spudaeus Then why is it we see the poor usually sadder than the rich?

Hedonius Because most are doubly poor. It is true, disease, hunger,
30 watchings, labours, and nakedness weaken one's physical condition, yet not in these states only but even at death itself cheerfulness breaks through. Though the mind is in fact attached to a mortal body, nevertheless, since mind is the stronger, it somehow assimilates the very body, especially if spiritual energy⁶² is added to the impetuous force of nature. Hence it is that
35 we often see truly righteous men die with more cheerfulness than others feast.

Spudaeus Yes, I've often wondered at that.

Hedonius But you should not think it wonderful that where God, the fount of all joy, is present, there insuperable happiness exists. What's strange about
40 the mind of a truly righteous man rejoicing continually in a mortal body, since if that same man goes down to the depths of hell he will suffer no

loss of happiness?⁶³ Wherever is a pure heart, there God is. Wherever God is, there is paradise, heaven, happiness. Where happiness is, there is true gladness and unfeigned cheerfulness.

Spudaeus But they would live more pleasantly if they didn't have certain
5 discomforts; and delights would be available that they disregard or don't attain.

Hedonius Exactly what 'discomforts' do you mean? Those to which we as human beings are liable by universal law – hunger, thirst, disease, weariness, old age, death, thunderbolts, earthquakes, floods, wars?

10 **Spudaeus** Yes, those among others.

Hedonius But we're discussing things subject to human control, not those beyond human control.⁶⁴ And yet even in these misfortunes, the lot of the righteous is far more tolerable than that of men who pursue carnal pleasures by hook or by crook.⁶⁵

15 **Spudaeus** How so?

Hedonius In the first place, since their minds are disciplined to temperance and endurance they bear unavoidable ills more steadfastly than others do. Secondly, since they understand that everything is sent by God either to cleanse us of faults or to test our virtue, they receive it not only patiently but
20 gladly, as obedient sons from the hand of a gracious father; and they even give thanks, both for his merciful chastisement and for their inestimable gain.⁶⁶

Spudaeus But many bring ills of the flesh upon themselves.

Hedonius More employ physicians' remedies, however, to safeguard
25 or recover their health. On the other hand, to invite troubles, that is, poverty, bad health, persecution, disgrace, except when Christian charity compels, is not piety but folly. But whenever they are afflicted for Christ's and righteousness' sake, who would dare to call them unfortunate when the Lord himself terms them blessed and bids them rejoice at these
30 things?⁶⁷

Spudaeus All the same, these afflictions cause terrible suffering.

Hedonius They do, but what the fear of hell on the one hand, and hope of eternal blessedness on the other, easily swallow up. Come: were you convinced you would never be ill or feel any bodily discomfort in your
35 whole life if you allowed the surface of your skin to be pricked once by a pinpoint, wouldn't you accept so little pain willingly and gladly?

Spudaeus Of course. More than that, if I knew for certain I'd never have toothache in my whole life, I'd be content to let a needle be inserted quite deeply and even have both ears pierced through by an awl.⁶⁸

40 **Hedonius** But whatever affliction befalls us in this life is lighter and briefer, in comparison with eternal sufferings, than is a tiny, temporary wound

in comparison with man's life, however long, because there is no analogy between finite and infinite.⁶⁹

Spudaeus You're absolutely right.

Hedonius Now if somebody convinced you that you would be free of
5 trouble all your life long if you passed your hand once through a flame
(which Pythagoras forbade),⁷⁰ wouldn't you be glad to do it?

Spudaeus I'd do it even a hundred times, provided the one who promised didn't deceive me.

Hedonius God cannot deceive. But that sensation of the flame lasts longer,
10 in comparison with a man's whole life, than a whole life compared with
heavenly bliss, though you outlived three Nestors;⁷¹ since that thrusting of
the hand, however brief, is *some* portion of this life; but the entire life of man
is no portion of eternity.

Spudaeus I've nothing to say against that.

Hedonius Do you believe, then, that those who press on to this eternity with
15 their whole heart and an assured hope will be tormented by the ills of this
life, when the passage is so short?

Spudaeus I don't think they will, provided they have a settled conviction
and a firm hope of attaining eternity.

Hedonius I come now to the delights you cited by way of objection. 'They
20 refrain from dances, revels, shows.' They despise them, inasmuch as they
enjoy far more agreeable ones and have no less delight, but in a different
fashion: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart
of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'⁷² St
25 Paul knew well what songs, dances, exultings, revels the godly have even in
this life.

Spudaeus But there are some permissible pleasures they deny themselves.

Hedonius Immoderate use even of permissible pleasures is not permissible.
But that apart, those who seem to lead a hard life win on all other counts.
30 What spectacle can be more splendid than the sight of this world? Men dear
to God derive far more pleasure from this than others do; for those, whilst
they behold this admirable work with curious gaze, are tormented in mind
because they fail to comprehend the causes of it all. Some among them even
murmur, Momus-like,⁷³ against the maker, often calling Nature stepmother
35 instead of mother⁷⁴ – nominally a slander against Nature but actually an
unfavourable reflection upon the creator of Nature,⁷⁵ if there is any 'Nature'
at all. But the godly man beholds with reverent, innocent eyes, and with
surpassing inward delight, the works of his Lord and Father, marvelling
at every one, finding fault with none but giving thanks for all, since he
40 considers them all to be created for man's sake. And so in individual things
he reveres the creator's omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness, of which he

discerns traces in created objects.⁷⁶ Just imagine, now, that there is really some such palace as Apuleius imagines for Psyche,⁷⁷ or one more splendid and magnificent if possible. Bring to it two spectators: one a stranger who came only to view it, the other a servant or son of the man who built this
 5 building. Which will be more enthusiastic about it, the stranger to whom the building means nothing personally, or the son who to his immense delight beholds in the structure his beloved father's genius, wealth, and splendour, and whose pleasure is enhanced when he reflects that this whole structure was made for his own sake?

10 **Spudaeus** Your question needs no answer. But most men, even the undevout, know that the heavens and what is encompassed by the heavens are created for man.

Hedonius Nearly all of them know it but they don't all remember it. If it does occur to them, however, the one who takes more pleasure in it is he
 15 who loves the maker more; just as he who aspires to the heavenly life gazes at the heavens more eagerly.

Spudaeus Very likely.

Hedonius Now the deliciousness of banquets does not consist in choice foods or the seasonings of cooks but in sound health and a good appetite.⁷⁸
 20 Beware, then, of thinking any Lucullus dines more enjoyably off the partridges, pheasants, doves, hares, scari,⁷⁹ sheat-fish, or morays served to him than does a godly man off black bread, herbs, or legumes, with water or small beer or well-diluted wine for his drink. Think, moreover, that he receives these as gifts from a kind Father; that prayer seasons everything;
 25 that grace before meals sanctifies everything; that his companion is Sacred Scripture, refreshing his mind more than food his body; that he finishes his meal with a thanksgiving; that finally he rises from table not stuffed but revived, not surfeited but restored in mind and body alike. Or do you suppose any vulgar gourmand dines more enjoyably?

30 **Spudaeus** But if we believe Aristotle, sexual love offers the greatest pleasure.⁸⁰

Hedonius Here too the godly man wins, no less than in dining. Look at it this way: the stronger his devotion to his wife, the more pleasurable is the marriage-bed. No men love their wives more ardently than those who
 35 cherish them as Christ cherished the church,⁸¹ for men who 'love' their wives for the sake of physical pleasure do not even love them. Add to this that sexual intercourse is sweeter for being infrequent, a fact known even to the profane poet who wrote that 'temperance enhances pleasures.'⁸² Though the least part of the pleasure is the actual sexual union. Much greater
 40 is the pleasure derived from unbroken intimacy, which cannot be more delightful than among those who love each other equally and sincerely

with Christian love. Among other persons love often cools when physical passion wanes. Christian love grows stronger as carnal pleasure fades. Or haven't I convinced you yet that none live more enjoyably than those who live righteously?

5 **Spudaeus** I only wish everyone were as convinced as I am.

Hedonius But if people who live agreeably are Epicureans, none are more truly Epicureans than the righteous and godly. And if it's names that interest us, no one better deserves the name of Epicurean than the revered founder and head of the Christian philosophy, for in Greek *ἐπίκουρος* means 'helper.'⁸³ He alone, when the law of nature was all but blotted out by sins, when the law of Moses incited to lusts rather than cured them,⁸⁴ when Satan ruled in the world unchallenged, brought timely aid to perishing humanity. Completely mistaken, therefore, are those who talk in their foolish fashion about Christ's having been sad and gloomy in character and calling upon us to follow a dismal mode of life. On the contrary, he alone shows the most enjoyable life of all and the one most full of true pleasure;⁸⁵ but let the Tantallean rock be far away!⁸⁶

Spudaeus What's that riddle?

Hedonius You'll smile at the story, but this is a joke with a serious meaning.

20 **Spudaeus** I'm waiting for the serious joke.

Hedonius Those who in ancient times liked to teach philosophical wisdom under the guise of fables tell us that a certain Tantalus was invited to the table of the gods, which (we are assured) was a sumptuous one. When the hour came for the guests to leave, Jupiter, thinking his bounty required that the guest should not depart without a going-away gift,⁸⁷ permitted him to request anything he liked; whatever he asked he would receive. Tantalus, being a dull creature who measured human happiness in terms of throat and belly, expressed a desire to recline at such a table all his life. Jupiter assented; the prayer was granted. Tantalus sits at a table furnished with all sorts of dainties; he has nectar at hand; there is no lack of roses or perfumes such as can delight the nostrils of gods; the cupbearer Ganymede, or someone like Ganymede, is at his side;⁸⁸ the Muses stand near, singing sweetly; comic Silenus dances;⁸⁹ jesters too are present; in short, whatever can delight any human sense is there. But in the midst of all these he sits sad, depressed, and anxious, neither merry with laughter nor touching anything set before him.

35 **Spudaeus** Why?

Hedonius Because above his head, as he reclines at table, a huge stone hangs by a hair and seems about to fall.

Spudaeus I'd get away from such a table!

40 **Hedonius** But what he prayed for has become destiny, since Jupiter is not so lenient as our God, who cancels men's disastrous prayers if only they repent

of them. And besides, that same stone which forbids Tantalus to eat keeps him from escaping, because he fears that if he makes a move it will fall and crush him.

Spudaeus An amusing story.

- 5 **Hedonius** But now hear something you won't think amusing. The common crowd seek a pleasant life in external things, though that is unattainable unless the mind is free of anxiety; for those with a bad conscience have a much heavier stone hanging over them than hangs over Tantalus – indeed, not hanging over but pushing and pressing their minds. And it is by no
10 empty fear that the heart is afflicted, but every single hour it expects to be cast into hell. What, I ask you, in human affairs is so sweet that it could really cheer a mind menaced by such a stone?

Spudaeus Nothing, surely, except madness or unbelief.⁹⁰

- Hedonius** If young men who are crazed by pleasures as by Circe's cup⁹¹
15 and welcome honeyed poison in place of what is truly pleasurable would ponder these facts, how zealously would they guard against thoughtless acceptance of what might consume their hearts all their lives! What would they not do to lay up against approaching old age the provision of a good conscience and an unstained honour! What is more wretched than that old
20 age which beholds with great horror, whenever it looks back, how comely are the things it neglected, how sordid the ones it eagerly embraced; again, when it looks ahead and perceives the last day coming close and, directly after this, the everlasting torments of hell?

- Spudaeus** The most fortunate, I think, are those who kept their youth
25 unsoiled and who, always advancing in their pursuits of righteousness, have reached the goal of old age.

Hedonius The next place is due to those who recover early from youthful debauchery.

Spudaeus But what counsel have you for that wretched old man?

- 30 **Hedonius** 'While there's life there's hope.'⁹² I urge him to take refuge in God's mercy.

Spudaeus But the longer he's lived, the larger his mass of sins has grown. By now it exceeds the sands of the sea.⁹³

- Hedonius** But God's mercies far outnumber those sands. Even if sands
35 cannot be counted by man, still they are finite in number; but the mercy of the Lord knows neither bound nor limit.

Spudaeus But one who's shortly to die hasn't time.

- Hedonius** The shorter the time, the more passionately should he cry aloud. What can reach from earth to heaven is long enough with God: and even a
40 brief prayer gets through to heaven,⁹⁴ provided it is uttered with fervent force of spirit. The woman who was a sinner, in the Gospel, is said to have

done lifelong penance.⁹⁵ But with how few words the dying thief won paradise from Christ!⁹⁶ If he⁹⁷ cries with his whole heart, 'Have mercy on me, O God, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies,'⁹⁸ the Lord will take away the Tantalean stone, will grant him the hearing of joy and gladness, and his bones broken by contrition shall rejoice for sins forgiven.⁹⁹

NOTES

- 1 The names mean 'devoted to pleasure' and 'earnest,' 'diligent.' Spudus, a variant of the second name, appears in 'A Feast of Many Courses.'
- 2 *De finibus bonorum et malorum* (45 BC), an analysis of Stoic, Epicurean, and Academic systems of ethics. In books 1 and 2, Epicurean ethics are explained, then criticized by a Stoic; in books 3 and 4, Stoic ethics are described, then refuted by Cicero as an Academic; book 5, after summarizing Peripatetic ethics, considers whether virtue alone confers happiness. The Old Academy, the school of Plato and Platonism, was succeeded in the fourth and third centuries BC by a New Academy, in which both scepticism and controversies over the certitude of knowledge flourished. Antiochus of Ascalon (first century BC) claimed that he had reconciled the differences in the teachings of his predecessors as heads of the Academy. By the time of Cicero, exclusive doctrines and distinctions among Epicureans, Stoics, and Academics or Peripatetics (new or old) were less precise and less clear, though persons professing one system or another continued to use the old identifying name.

Francis Bacon observed that to the heathen, moral philosophy had the place filled in the modern age (his own) by theology (*New Organon: Aphorisms* 1.79). Of all branches of philosophy, the most important in Erasmus' judgment was not logic or metaphysics but that which is productive of wisdom, *sapientia* (Allen Ep 2533:109–13). For him, therefore, moral philosophy was the most helpful as well as the most congenial of philosophic studies, and a discipline ancillary to theology. He responded to such writings as Cicero's *De officiis*, the *Tusculan Disputations*, *De amicitia*, and *De senectute* with aesthetic and intellectual satisfaction, while dialectic and metaphysics he could read as a duty but with little pleasure or profit. He valued *De finibus* too. That book seems never to have been the favourite the *Tusculans* were, but it had, and still has, importance as an exposition and comparison of influential types of Greek thought on perennial topics dealing with human experience, reason, and values. For many readers in the world of Erasmus, if we may judge by the evidence of printing and publishing history, moral philosophy had a strong literary appeal in addition to its homiletic and other uses.

The complete works of Plato and Aristotle in Greek and Latin were available to scholars and other serious students. Few of Epicurus' texts survived, but we have a collection of his forty-odd 'golden maxims' on the art of living. Later readers could learn of Epicurean doctrines not merely from quotations or fragments but from Lucretius' famous poem *De rerum natura* (unknown in the Middle Ages, though Lucretius was a contemporary of Cicero), which expounds the atomistic theory adopted by Epicurus from Democritus and

defends Epicurean ethics. There was a wealth of Stoic texts; for example by the younger Seneca, Cleanthes, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. Cicero's writings, coloured by his strong sympathy with Stoic ethical ideals (as in the final book of the *Tusculan Disputations*) and his scepticism as to epistemology, offered eloquent arguments for the New Academic and Peripatetic positions. To Renaissance readers, the literary form and manner of philosophical discourse, whether in verse or prose, and very often dialogue, was no hindrance to its effectiveness. On the contrary, it was a distinct advantage: it made philosophy attractive by making it readable, and by rhetorical power made it persuasive.

- 3 Cicero speaks of goods and evils as having 'ends' because, like other thinkers, he inherited Aristotle's emphasis on the aim or ultimate purposes of human acts. Indeed everything in nature, whether human or not, has an end or purpose, some drive towards completion of what it is 'for'; as an acorn's 'end' is an oak tree. Similarly, by the Aristotelian doctrines of potentiality and actualization, development or growth in human behaviour moves towards greater goods or greater evils. What then is the principle or assumption according to which states of goodness can be defined, assessed, and chosen? These are questions discussed and criticized in *De finibus*. The good is 'that which is by nature perfect,' 'that to which all right actions are a means while it is not itself a means to anything else' (*De finibus* 3.10.33, 2.2.5 trans H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [London and Cambridge, Mass 1914] 253, 83). The chief good, *summum bonum*, is virtue; nothing more can be desired (4.17.46).
- 4 Cicero. He was often called Tully by English writers.
- 5 Cf Terence *Heautontimorumenos* 499
- 6 *Adagia* 1 iii 88
- 7 Cf *Adagia* 1 x 30.
- 8 Greek in the original; a technical term in ancient philosophy
- 9 Stoics stressed that 'appropriate' actions must be preferred; that is, actions in harmony with nature; but the chief good is the rational, willed achievement of virtue, not merely the struggle to attain it. Things done in accordance with nature – good conduct – are necessary steps towards the goal, virtue itself, which is the end to which all else is a means (*De finibus* 3.6.20–1). No matter what his circumstances, the truly virtuous man is happy; even when suffering he is happy. Cf *Tusculan Disputations* 5.28.80–1. Peripatetics considered themselves the legatees of Aristotle in ethical philosophy. Aristotle defined human good as 'activity of soul in accordance with virtue, and if there are more than one virtue, in accordance with the best and most complete' (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1.7 1098a16–17 trans W.D. Ross in *The Works of Aristotle* ix [Oxford 1925]). 'Epicureanism' was used and is still used to mean 'hedonism' or addiction to pleasure and avoidance of pain at all costs. As Spudaeus says in the colloquy, no school was more detested. But pleasure is of many kinds, and both Aristippus (founder of the Cyrenaic school; see 'The Profane Feast' n40) and Epicurus held that moderation and self-control should regulate pleasure. Epicurus thought a quiet, retired life of virtue was the best. Lucretius, whose *De rerum natura* is unsurpassed as a guide to Epicureanism, had lofty conceptions of the good life, but in contrast with Stoicism, Epicureanism was indifferent to gods. Gods exist, but are irrelevant to men. They did not create the world nor do they govern it. Popular religion is merely superstition. There is no immortality.

Death is the annihilation of personality; the atoms of which man is made simply disperse. Stoics taught that because man has reason, he ought to be able, by self-discipline, to resist passions. Peripatetics argued that passions are not altogether avoidable or dangerous or useless; they are natural. Yet nature must be overcome. Therefore the passions are tests, incentives to virtue if rightly understood. Erasmus preferred this judgment to the inhumane rigour of the Stoic view (*Enchiridion* LB V 13E–14F / Holborn 44:18–45:6 / CWE 66 44). Yet he admired the courage and steadfastness of the true Stoic.

All the major systems of pagan ethics had precepts of value for modern as well as ancient peoples, and representatives we can admire. Not only that; they had at least some ethical principles consonant with those held by Christians. Plato, Socrates, Epictetus, Aristotle, even Epicurus were seekers after truth. Even pagan philosophies, at their best, 'concern Christ' in Erasmus' phrase, because, by divine ordinance, they contributed to knowledge and enlargement of mind and thus were part of the preparation for Christ. See the passage in 'The Godly Feast' cited in the introduction to the present colloquy and the notes to those pages; *Paraclesis* LB V 142A–D or VI *4 recto; CWE 23 xxx.

- 10 Cicero *Paradoxa Stoicorum* 1.14
- 11 More had said the same thing in his letter to Thomas Ruthall accompanying his translation of Lucian's *Cynicus*. See Yale CWM 3 part 1 3, 5, 138–9.
- 12 In *De finibus* 4.74–7, Cicero criticizes some of the extravagant claims of the Stoics, their unreasonable assertions or paradoxes that contradict common experience and judgment. He discusses such language briefly in his *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, where he attributes (or pretends to attribute) it to Cato the Censor and amuses himself by feigning to show how acceptable these paradoxes can be, for example 'only what is morally noble is good,' or 'virtue is sufficient for happiness' (1.6, 2.16).
- 13 Plautus *Mostellaria* 544–5
- 14 Cf *Enchiridion* LB V 42B–C / Holborn 94:33 / CWE 66 89–90.
- 15 The mineral asbestos (Pliny *Naturalis historia* 19.19–20)
- 16 Greek in the original
- 17 Matt 5:4
- 18 *Adagia* II x 9
- 19 Sardanapalus, legendary king of Assyria (ninth century BC) was notorious for luxuriousness and effeminacy; see *Adagia* III vii 27. Philoxenus and Apicius were Greek and Roman gourmands and experts on cookery. They are named together in CWE 23 106:15. On Apicius see 'The Profane Feast' n5.
- 20 See 'The New Mother' 601:31–605:2.
- 21 Cf *Ecclesiastes* LB V 914E–F, 969A.
- 22 Proverbial; *Adagia* III ii 98
- 23 See 1079:24–35 below.
- 24 Cf 'Faith' 430:22.
- 25 The one-eyed giants in Homer *Odyssey* 9; *Adagia* I x 69
- 26 Not merely 'virtuously' but *pie*, which in this context, as often in Erasmus' writings, has a definitely religious as well as ethical connotation. Cf n34 below.
- 27 *Adagia* IV vii 98, citing Plato *Philebus* 19E
- 28 Cf 'The Funeral' 766:7–35 and n6; Cornelius in that colloquy approaches death with joy and hope.

- 29 See *Enchiridion* LB v 42B-D / Holborn 94:30-95:14 / CWE 66 90.
- 30 Terence *Adelphi* 117
- 31 a rich man] The first edition (March 1533), *Opera omnia* 1540, and LB all read *divitem*. Schrevelius (Leiden 1655; repr Amsterdam 1693) and Rabus (Rotterdam 1693) question *divitem* and suggest *dementem* 'mad.' This change makes better sense than *divitem*, but *divitem* makes sufficient sense, and other forms of the same word for 'rich' occur above ('grow rich ... riches'). If rendered 'Dives' after the rich man of Luke 16:19-31, the reading *divitem* is even more appropriate here.
- 32 Terence *Adelphi* 785-6
- 33 *per fas nefasque*; Livy 6.14.10 and Horace *Epodes* 5.87. See 'Youth' n33.
- 34 *pie ... pietas*. See n26 above.
- 35 The theme of illusory tricks and specifically of magic banquets is as old as Homer (*Odyssey* 11.582-92 on Tantalus) and the Bible (the temptation of Christ by Satan in Matt 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13). One of many examples in Renaissance literature is the magic banquet in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* 3.3.18-68. See Jacqueline E.M. Latham 'The Magic Banquet in *The Tempest*' *Shakespeare Studies* 12 (1979) 215-27 on this and other examples. In *Adagia* II vii 31, Erasmus refers to a story he found in Suidas' *Lexicon* (tenth century) of a magician, Pases, who, like the one in the colloquy, could produce magically a splendid banquet and then just as quickly cause it to vanish. In 'The Epicurean,' as earlier in 'Alchemy,' the magician is a priest. Magicians were suspect, for they used 'curious arts' (Acts 19:19) and might be invoking occult powers (as 'from the most unholy scriptures' here). A priest had better think twice before learning magic and producing illusions, even if these seem harmless. Erasmus in 1501 tells a lurid tale of a sorcerer near Orléans who learned magic from a wicked priest and thus was able to summon the devil for evil purposes (Allen Ep 143:68-185 / CWE Ep 143:74-202). See *Explanatio symboli* LB v 1186F and 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' n49.
- 36 Proverbial; *Adagia* I viii 66
- 37 A question asked by Plato in *Gorgias* 494c and *Philebus* 46A, 51D
- 38 Greek in the original
- 39 Syphilis; also known as the Italian, French, or Spanish pox. See 'The Soldier and the Carthusian' n45 and 'A Marriage in Name Only' n12.
- 40 *Adagia* II iv 3
- 41 'Epicurize' and 'cure' are an attempt to reproduce the pun in two Greek expressions in the original. Literally translated, they mean 'to Epicurize' and 'to rush to the barber's shop.' The point is that barbers were also surgeons. Men who caught the 'Neapolitan itch' went to a barber in search of a cure.
- 42 Greek in the original
- 43 *De finibus* 2.4.11
- 44 Cf *De finibus* 1.11.39
- 45 A variant of *Adagia* I ix 30 ('The treasure consisted of coals')
- 46 See 1077:34 above.
- 47 See Allen Epp 2720:31-44, 2745:22-3, both written in 1532. One of Erasmus' best poems is about old age; see CWE 85-6 12-25, 412-39 no 2 / Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* 280 no 83. This was written in 1506, when Erasmus was close to forty.
- 48 Like that of Cornelius in 'The Funeral'

- 49 Greek in the original; *Adagia* II i 32
- 50 *Adagia* I i 28. The Phrygians hesitated too long to intervene in the Trojan war, when they might have prevented so much bloodshed. Christians are even more hesitant about ending war among Christians, Erasmus adds.
- 51 Prov 14:13
- 52 Ecclus (Sirach) 30:16
- 53 Prov 15:13
- 54 Prov 17:22
- 55 Prov 15:15
- 56 'Mystical' refers to those biblical texts which either contain truths given by direct revelation or in the mystical experiences of the writer or which, in contrast with what may be understood in a literal or historical sense, convey or emphasize the spiritual, allegorical, or anagogical senses (pertaining to a future life); for instance the Gospel of John 1:1-18, 6:32-58, 8:12-32, 10:14-17; Eph 3:2-11; Col 1:25-9
- 57 Orcus, the abode of the dead, or Orcus lord of the underworld
- 58 Ps 23:4 (22:4 Vulg). Erasmus wrote a commentary on this psalm (1530); text in LB V 311C-346B.
- 59 Greek in the original
- 60 1 Cor 3:16; 2 Cor 6:16
- 61 On Sardanapalus see n19 above; on 'six hundred,' 'The Funeral' n76; on a Franciscan as an example here, 'The Seraphic Funeral,' especially the 'Note on Franciscan Poverty' 1026-32.
- 62 Greek in the original
- 63 Ps 139 (138 Vulg):8-12
- 64 For a list of current discomforts, disasters, and calamities see 'The New Mother' 592:17-35.
- 65 See n33 above.
- 66 Cf Prov 3:11-12; Heb 12:1-13; Rev 3:19-20.
- 67 Matt 5:10-12
- 68 Self-explanatory; yet the words recall something more, for Erasmus' phrase *subula perforari* is the one used in Exod 21:6 Vulg in describing the ceremony by which a man accepts lifelong slavery in return for permission to keep his wife and children, whom he would lose if he chose freedom.
- 69 Compare More's *Four Last Things* (between 1520 and 1525): 'If virtue were all painful, and vice all pleasant, yet since death shall shortly finish both the pain of the one and the pleasure of the other, great madness were it if we would not rather take a short pain for the winning of everlasting pleasure, than a short pleasure for the winning of everlasting pain. But now, if it be true, as it is indeed, that our sin is painful and our virtue pleasant, how much is it then a more madness to take sinful pain in this world, that shall win us eternal pain in hell, rather than pleasant virtue in this world, that shall win us eternal pleasure in heaven?' (*English Works* 495).
- 70 Forbidden by Pythagoras because fire is a divinity. Fire was said to occupy the centre of the universe because it was 'more precious' than earth and was called the 'Guard-house of Zeus' (Aristotle *De caelo* 2.13 293a20-293b4).
- 71 *Adagia* I ii 56
- 72 1 Cor 2:9

- 73 Momus was a minor deity who did nothing constructive himself but found fault with what other gods did. Finally they expelled him from Olympus. Folly implies that they might have done better to listen to him sometimes (LB IV 416C–417B / ASD IV-3 88:294–312 / CWE 27 94).
- 74 On 'stepmother' as synonymous with harshness or cruelty compare 'Marriage' n62. In the adage *Dulce bellum inexpertis*, which denounces war and warmongers, Nature declares man is now so wicked and degenerate that it is no wonder people call her a stepmother instead of mother (*Adagia* IV i 1 LB II 954D–955A / Phillips 'Adages' 316–17).
- 75 *qui naturam condidit*. 'Creator' (*creator*) is always a standard theological term in Judaic and Christian writings, but as predicate Erasmus sometimes used 'formed' or 'established' (*condiderit*) instead of 'created' or 'made' (*Explanatio symboli* LB V 1147B–D). 'Author' is another word he liked because of its precision, which however is not so evident in English. See 'Faith' nn89, 90 and 'The Usefulness of the Colloquies' 1108:31–1109:3.
- 76 Eusebius in 'The Godly Feast' tells his guests the beauty of blooming nature reminds him that 'God the creator's wisdom is equal to his goodness' (175:27–8), and see *Explanatio symboli* LB V 1092E–F. This has been a persistent and familiar theme in theistic literature since the time of the Hebrew psalmists and Plato (*Timaeus* 28–30 and *Laus* 10), to name no others. In these lines of his colloquy, Erasmus goes further by contrasting reverence for the creation's creator with the stubborn denial of those who 'fail to comprehend' the First Cause.
- 77 In his *Metamorphoses* or *Golden Ass* 5.1–3
- 78 Similar truisms on moderation in feasting are repeated in other *convivia* of the *Colloquia*. On Lucullus, see 'The Profane Feast' n18.
- 79 Or parrot-fish, as in 'The Profane Feast'; see n83.
- 80 *De generatione animalium* 1.18 723b33–724a3
- 81 Eph 5:28–9
- 82 Juvenal 11.208
- 83 Or 'guardian,' 'guide'
- 84 See 'The Godly Feast' 187:28–191:37; 'A Fish Diet' 682:39–687:8, 691:2–701:16.
- 85 For Christ 'makes all men to rejoice' ('The Godly Feast' 183:18 and n98).
- 86 *Adagia* II vi 14, II ix 7, IV iii 31. In Homer's brief version of the myth, Tantalus, always thirsty, tries to drink from the lake in which he stands, but when he lowers his head the water disappears. Above his head are trees loaded with fruit, but when he reaches to pluck it the wind blows it away (*Odyssey* 11.582–92). Some later ancient versions, cited in *Adagia* II ix 7, tell of the huge stone above Tantalus, seemingly about to fall on him. Erasmus has Tantalus sitting at a table and the stone hanging by a hair. He may have borrowed this episode from the story of Damocles (on which see Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 5.21.61–2).
- 87 *xenio*. Cf 'The Godly Feast' n287.
- 88 Cf the ironical description of the waiter in 'Inns.'
- 89 See 'A Fish Diet' n237 for evidence that in another context Silenus could be, to Erasmus, very different from a comic figure.
- 90 In his lectures on Ps 90 (89 Vulg), delivered between October 1534 and the end of May 1535, Luther objected to these lines. Commenting on Ps 90:7, 'Quia defecimus in ira tua, et in furore tuo turbati sumus,' he asks 'How can human

nature bear to think of God's wrath without tears? . . . How can it be indifferent to death, since it knows that it must die because of sin and as a result of God's wrath? Since reason is determined to escape God's wrath, it proposes either the way of disdain or the way of blasphemy.' Then Luther calls attention to the myth of Tantalus in Erasmus' 'The Epicurean,' which he had read in 1533 or 1534. Referring to Erasmus' interpretation here, he says 'What can be, so Erasmus argues, a more effective remedy against this evil' – that is, against condemnation to eternal punishment – 'than unbelief or insanity, which refuses to believe God's threat? That is the way reason argues.' But such thoughts lead to blasphemy. 'Therefore,' he adds, 'Epicurus advises: "Become either insane or incredulous and thus rid yourself of this feeling of wrath and sin when you find yourself in the throes of miseries and death."' Foolish advice, of course, and leading only to hopeless despair in those who disdain or blaspheme (LW 13 107–9 / WA 40 part 3 537:14–540:16).

Luther errs seriously by assuming Spudaeus' comment on 'madness or unbelief' expresses the approval of the author, Erasmus. But Luther takes the passage out of context. This is not surprising, because he had concluded years earlier that Erasmus, like too many other learned men, was an Epicurean, in the most derogatory senses of the epithet; see WA *Tischreden* 1 nos 352, 432, 466, 468; 3 no 3795 (all five selections are also in Clemen 8); Allen Ep 1670:28–32. He had been corrupted in Venice and Rome, Luther adds; we all know that Epicureanism is rife in Italy.

- 91 *Adagia* IV ix 43. Circe was the sea nymph and enchantress who turned Ulysses' companions into swine but was later persuaded to turn them into men again and release them (Homer *Odyssey* 10).
- 92 Proverbial; *Adagia* II iv 12
- 93 Biblical (Gen 22:17, 32:12; Rev 20:8) as well as classical (*Adagia* I iv 44, I vii 87)
- 94 Cf Eccles (Sirach) 35:20–1 Vulg. When Rabelais paraphrases this verse (*Gargantua* 1.41), he adds 'and long swilling empties the cups' ('et longa potatio evacuat scyphos'), words taken by his editors as a probably monkish dictum (as in the *Oeuvres de François Rabelais* ed Abel Lefranc et al 6 vols [Paris 1912–55] II 347 n22). Anyone familiar with medieval satire or Goliardic verse or with the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* would be inclined to agree, though I do not recall another instance of this particular example.
- 95 Luke 7:37–50; that she had done lifelong penance is not stated explicitly.
- 96 Luke 23:39–43
- 97 The Latin text does not make clear whether the subject (understood) is the dying thief or any – or every – repentant sinner.
- 98 Ps 51:1–2 (50:3 Vulg)
- 99 Ps 51:8 (50:10 Vulg)

THE USEFULNESS OF THE COLLOQUIES

De utilitate Colloquiorum

First printed in the June 1526 edition, where it follows the first printing of the anonymous *Scholia*, brief explanatory notes on colloquies published before June 1526. These *Scholia* were reprinted in many early editions of the *Colloquia*. 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' was included at or near the end of most editions of the text thereafter and with some translations as well. As though to prepare readers for its vigour and emphasis, a few excerpts from Erasmus' letters, under the title *Coronis apologetica*, preceded it in the Rabus and Schrevelius editions (1693), LB (1703), and others. Erasmus' correspondence and other contemporary evidence of many kinds – from readers, printers, booksellers, scholars, and dignitaries secular or ecclesiastical in every important nation of Europe – testify to the wide circulation, popularity, and influence of the book. But there was another side to its success. An attentive reader of these dialogues today, even if his knowledge of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century civilization is limited, can hardly avoid an inference that not all contemporary readers could have been pleased by them. Satire and irony, and other combinations of criticism and wit, can sting or anger a proud profession or institution and its representatives. Like Swift or Voltaire, Erasmus was certain that he understood his opponents, in fact understood them only too well. However tiresome their complaints, he often insisted that by exposing their errors and ignorance, impugning their motives, and mocking their pretensions, he was really doing them, and the cause of enlightenment, a service. Naturally his critics did not agree with him. Academic critics (notoriously those in Paris and Louvain but not only those), literati in France and Italy, monks and friars, even prelates, found fault with his editing, translating, and interpreting of Scripture and his opinions on certain ordinances and customs affecting Christians. *Enchiridion*, *Moriae encomium*, and many of the colloquies were particularly disliked.

That conservative divines, unsympathetic with humanism, should have been offended by passages in the *Colloquies*, on both moral and religious grounds, is understandable. Erasmus' lively pages on friars, monasticism, pilgrimages, fasting, clerical morality, and superstitious practices sometimes troubled even readers he esteemed and who esteemed him. Such readers he tried to mollify. Resentful churchmen, major or minor, who detected traces of heresy in his pages, could not be appeased. The probability that some of them discovered themselves, in thin disguise, in the very colloquies under suspicion did nothing to lessen their desire to make difficulties for Erasmus.

No doubt they were perfectly sincere, most of them, in their conviction that the *Colloquies* was a pernicious book, and they were too sure of themselves to be patient with what they considered equivocations by an irreverent satirist. Not all denunciations came from defenders of the Roman church. Luther spoke vehemently against Erasmus, as many entries in the *Tischreden* confirm. He detested the *Colloquies* and what he fancied was its author's sly subversion of religion in that and other books: verily a Lucian and Epicurus, he says of Erasmus more than once (see the introduction to these volumes xxviii and 'The Epicurean' n90). Although disputes between Luther and Erasmus require a long chapter in their biographies, they play only a slight part in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*,' which is concerned with adversaries in the academic and ecclesiastical establishments.

As early as 1522 Erasmus was defending the purposes, methods, and utility of his *Colloquies* against assaults led by the Carmelite Nicolaas Baechem (Egmondanus) of Louvain (see Allen Epp 1299:4–71, 1300:1–42, 1301 / CWE Epp 1299:6–79, 1300:1–47, 1301; and 'Rash Vows' n14). By May 1526, his enemies in the faculty of theology at Paris, who had been complaining about him for several years, succeeded in carrying a motion of censure against the *Colloquies*. (This is the point of the allusion to 'deputies' at 1106:16 below). Sixty-nine passages in the book were denounced as erroneous or tending to corrupt youthful morals. These censures were not printed until 1531 but were well known to Erasmus, who rebutted them in his *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* (1532; LB IX 928D–954E, where the charges as well as the replies are reprinted). A few weeks before the faculty acted, Erasmus chose to defend his *Colloquies* in a letter (Ep 1704, dated 30 April 1526) to the bishop of Lincoln, John Longland, in which he sums up what is said more diffusely in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*.' On criticisms of the *Colloquies* and Erasmus' defence of them see the introduction to these volumes sections 5 and 6.

To the edition of June 1526, Erasmus added most of the apology called 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*,' that is, his account of most of the colloquies published before June 1526 (as far as 1105:11 below). This defence is dated 21 May 1526, a date carelessly left unchanged in all later editions. In June 1528, the Parisians again condemned the *Colloquies*. This time the faculty of theology was supported by the faculties of arts, canon law, and medicine. In September of that year Erasmus again defended his *Colloquies* in a letter to Longland (Allen Ep 2037:13–38), especially what he had written on morals, pilgrimages, and confession. In the edition of March 1529 Erasmus added to 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' comments on two colloquies published in 1527 and six published in that March 1529 edition; in September 1529 he inserted further remarks justifying a few of the colloquies he had already defended in June 1526. See n61 and n75 below.

This apology, addressed to the reader, bears obvious marks of hasty composition. It pays much more attention to some dialogues than to others that are of equal or greater importance; it gives several pages, for instance, to 'Rash Vows' but only a few lines to 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake.' It omits mention of 'The Shipwreck' and several other colloquies already in print ('Inns,' 'The Epithalamium of Pieter Gillis,' 'Echo'), perhaps because most of those were not controversial. Not all colloquies mentioned are named in order of printing. Some of the titles vary from the usual ones. Most of the titles Erasmus names are in the ablative case, preceded by *in* (as '*in Peregrinatione religionis ergo*,' '*in Funere*,' '*in Senatulo*'). Elsewhere titles are nominative (*Diversoria* or *Militaria*) or genitive (*Proci et puellae*, *Abbatis et eruditae*) or ablative after *de* (*De rebus ac vocabulis*, *De . . . Reuchlino*). Whatever the reason, the oddities or irregularities of 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' remained unchanged in successive early editions I have checked.

So far as we know, Erasmus made no further changes in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' after September 1529. He had answered Spanish critics in *Apologia adversus monachos quosdam Hispanos* (1528; LB IX 1015D–1094A). When occasion invited, he continued to defend his *Colloquies* in letters. That the author's protestations appeased his critics is unlikely, nor does it matter much. In the long run the book speaks for itself.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS ROTERODAMUS TO THE READER

To such an extent does Slander,¹ with its train of Furies, rage nowadays against everyone and everything throughout the entire world that it is not
 5 safe to publish any book except under armed guard. But what could be safe enough against the sting of a backbiter who, like an adder deaf to the spell of the charmer,² ignores all explanation, no matter how reasonable? The first part of this work – which was mine and not mine³ – was issued through
 10 someone's rashness. When I saw it was cordially welcomed by students, I took advantage of the public's desire for the improvement of studies. As physicians do not always prescribe the most efficacious remedies for patients but make some allowance for their cravings,⁴ so likewise I thought it well to allure the young – who respond more readily to pleasing than to strict
 15 or harsh treatment – with this kind of bait. Accordingly I revised what was published, then added what might help to develop manners also; stealing (as it were) into the minds of young folk, who, as Aristotle truly wrote, are unsuitable hearers of moral philosophy,⁵ at least of the sort that is taught by formal rules.

Now if someone protests that it is undignified for an old man to play in this childish fashion, my answer is: 'I don't care how childish, if only it's useful.' And if greybeard grammar masters are commended for coaxing youngsters with bits of cake into wanting to learn the rudiments,⁶ I don't
 5 think I should be reproached for attracting youth with like zeal to refinement of Latin speech and to good conduct.⁷ Add, that to be acquainted with the foolish caprices and baseless notions of the public is part of good, practical sense. Young people learn these things better from this little book, I believe, than from experience, the teacher of fools. To many people the rules of
 10 grammar are repulsive. Aristotle's *Ethics* is not suited to boys, the theology of Scotus still less⁸ – it's not of much use even for improving the minds of grown men! But to implant from the start a taste for excellence in young minds is urgent. Moreover, I'm not sure anything is learned better than what is learned as a game.⁹ To confer a benefit through a trick is surely deception
 15 of the most innocent sort. Doctors who deceive patients in this manner are praised.¹⁰

Well, if I had only been joking in this affair, my critics apparently would have put up with it. But now, since in addition to dealing with refinement of language I have added here and there some passages to direct
 20 the mind towards religion, they slander me; and they probe the syllables through and through, precisely as if the dogmas of the Christian creed were solemnly spelled out in these pages! How mischievously they do this will be plainer when I have demonstrated the uncommon utility of some of the *Colloquies*.

25 For – quite aside from so many earnest maxims mingled with pleasantries, so many stories, so many histories, so many valuable explanations of things – in the colloquy 'Rash Vows,'¹¹ the superstitious and shameful fancy of some folk who think the essence of holiness is to have visited Jerusalem¹² is curbed.¹³ Hither, over such vast stretches of land
 30 and sea, hasten venerable bishops,¹⁴ deserting the flocks committed to their care; hither princes, their household and realm abandoned; hither husbands, their wives and children – of whose conduct and virtue the husband is necessarily guardian – left at home; hither young men and women, not without grave risk to morals and chastity. Some run back and forth again
 35 and again, do nothing else all their lives; and meanwhile the name of religion is used as a cover for superstition, faithlessness, foolishness, and recklessness. The deserter of his family, a violator of Paul's teaching, wins praise for his 'sanctity' and thinks of himself as one who has fulfilled the whole duty of man. Paul declares boldly in 1 Timothy 2, 'But if any
 40 provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.'¹⁵ But here Paul seems

to refer to widows who neglect their children and grandchildren (and that under pretence of religion!) while binding themselves completely to the church's observances. What is to be said of husbands who set out for Jerusalem, leaving behind them destitute children and impoverished young
 5 wives?

Of many examples I shall cite a single one, not so recent as to provoke hard feelings or so old but that grandchildren of the man are still alive; their loss was too great to permit them to forget the event. A certain magnate determined – from motives of piety, to be sure, but hardly from prudence –
 10 to visit Jerusalem before he died. So he put his affairs in order, committing all his wealth, his wife (whom he left pregnant), towns, and castles to the care and protection of an archbishop, as to a parent. When rumours reached him that the man had died on his pilgrimage, the archbishop acted the part of robber instead of parent. He seized all the dead man's possessions, then
 15 stormed and took the fortified castle to which the pregnant wife had fled. In order that no avenger of this most dreadful deed might survive, the woman was stabbed, perishing with her unborn child. Would not it have been a work of piety to dissuade such a husband from a perilous and unnecessary journey?¹⁶ How many examples of this kind might be found, I leave for
 20 others to estimate – to say nothing of the money spent! Even if we grant it is not completely wasted, no man of common sense will deny it could have been put to much better uses.

As for religious scruples, St Jerome commends Hilarion because, native and resident of Palestine though he was, he visited Jerusalem only once;
 25 it was close by and he did not want to appear disdainful of holy places.¹⁷ If Hilarion, a close neighbour, was deservedly praised for keeping clear of Jerusalem lest he seem to confine God to a narrow place – visiting it but once, on account of its nearness, so as not to offend people – what are we to say of men who travel to Jerusalem from England and Scotland at
 30 such large expense and through so many dangers, especially when their dearest relatives, to whom (according to the apostle's teaching) they owe unremitting care, have been left at home? 'To have been in Jerusalem is not of great importance, but to have lived righteously *is* important,' St Jerome proclaims.¹⁸ Yet it is likely that in Jerome's era more visible remains of
 35 antiquities were extant than now survive. Argument over vows I leave to others; the point of the colloquy is simply that one should not swear such vows rashly. That this is true, my words on page [38:27–9] show: 'especially when I had at home a wife still young and vigorous, children, and a family dependent upon me and supported by my daily labour,' etc.¹⁹ Of vows
 40 sworn, then, I shall say nothing, except that if I were pope, I would have little reluctance in releasing those who were bound by them. As for swearing

vows, just as I grant it is possible for someone to gain spiritual benefit from going to Jerusalem, so I would not hesitate to advise many, in the circumstances, to spend their time, money, and labour on other things more conducive to true godliness.

5 These, I believe, are righteous admonitions. Therefore, because of the irresponsibility, ignorance, or superstitiousness of many folk, I thought I should do well to warn youth on this subject, and I don't see who could be offended by this warning, except perhaps those who put profit above righteousness.

10 Nor do I condemn papal indulgences or briefs there;²⁰ but I do reprove the utterly frivolous man who, without even a thought of amending his life, puts his whole hope in human pardons. If, in this connection, a person but reflected how much men's devotion is impaired, partly by the fault of those who hawk papal indulgences, partly by the error of those who receive
15 pardons otherwise than as they should, he will admit it is worth while for youth to be warned about this matter. 'But in so doing you've given little thought to the commissioners.'²¹ I hear you, my good friend! If they are good men, they'll rejoice that the unsophisticated are warned; if they care more for profit than for righteousness – away with them!

20 In the colloquy 'In Pursuit of Benefices,' I reprove those who rush off to Rome to hunt for livings, frequently with serious loss of morals and money both; hence my remark that a priest should entertain himself with good authors instead of a concubine.²²

25 In 'Military Affairs,'²³ I condemn the wicked deeds and ungodly confession of soldiers, to deter young men from such behaviour.

In 'A Lesson in Manners,'²⁴ I teach a boy modesty and manners suitable to his age.

In 'The Whole Duty of Youth'²⁵ do I not inspire the young mind, by means of godly precepts, with a zeal for righteousness? The carping by some
30 persons at the part on confession was sheer slander, to which I replied long ago. I teach that confession ought to be accepted as though instituted for us by Christ. But whether it *was* so instituted, I have no intention either of asserting or of denying, because I am not altogether convinced of it, nor could I prove it to others.²⁶ As for my warning about taking your time in
35 deciding on a career and about choice of a priest to whom to commit your secrets²⁷ – this I thought needed by young people, and I see no reason to apologize for it. 'But then there will be fewer monks and priests.' Maybe there will – but better ones.²⁸ Any monk worthy of the name will back me on that. Furthermore, the ones who hunt proselytes for the sake of profit, or
40 because of superstition, fully deserve denunciation in everybody's writings to bring them to their senses.

In 'The Profane Feast,' I do not condemn the ordinances of the church concerning fasts and choice of foods, but I expose the superstition of certain persons who attach excessive importance to these matters while neglecting those that contribute more to godliness. Also I condemn the callousness
 5 of those who exact such observances of people whom the church does not intend to burden. Likewise the absurd holier-than-thou attitude of those who condemn their neighbour on such grounds. If, now, one will consider what a blight on true godliness this attitude produces among mankind, one will grant that scarcely any other admonition is more urgently needed. But on
 10 this topic we shall have more to say at another time.²⁹

In 'The Godly Feast,' since I make all my characters laymen and married men, I give ample demonstration of what the feasting of all Christians should be like. If certain priests and monks patterned their own banquets after this model, they would understand how far short they are of that high standard,
 15 a standard which should be higher than that of the laity.

In 'The Apotheosis [of Reuchlin],'³⁰ I show how much honour is owed to distinguished men who, by their assiduous labours, have done service to the liberal arts.

There are foolish persons who think the colloquy 'Courtship' indecent,
 20 though nothing more chaste could be imagined. If marriage is an honourable estate, then it is also honourable to be a suitor. And would that all suitors were such as I picture here, and marriages contracted with no other conversations! What can you do with those sour natures who are lacking in every grace, and to whom anything friendly and light-hearted seems immodest? This
 25 girl refuses the suitor a kiss when he is about to leave, in order to preserve her virginity intact for him. But what don't girls commonly grant suitors nowadays? Again, critics fail to notice how much thoughtful counsel is mingled with the pleasantries: about not rushing into marriage, about the selection not only of bodies but much more of minds, about the stability of
 30 marriage, about not contracting a marriage without parental consent, about keeping marriage pure, about rearing children in a godly way. Finally the girl invokes Christ's blessing upon the marriage. Aren't these matters proper for young people to know? And those who think their children's reading of this is harmful because of its 'indecent' make no objection to their reading
 35 of Plautus and the *Jests* of Poggio.³¹ Brilliant judgment!

In 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage,'³² I denounce those who, despite the opposition of parents, lure boys and girls into a monastery, playing upon their innocence or their superstitiousness, persuading them there is no hope of salvation outside a monastery.³³ If the world is not full of
 40 such fishermen; if countless happy natures, which had been chosen vessels of the Lord had they sensibly taken up a career suited to their natural talents,

are not most miserably buried alive by these creatures – then I have been wrong in my warning. But if ever I am compelled to speak my mind plainly on this topic,³⁴ I will give such a description of those kidnappers, and the magnitude of their mischief, that all will agree I had plenty of reason to utter
 5 these warnings. I wrote politely, however, to avoid giving malevolent men an occasion for making trouble.

In the next colloquy³⁵ I present, not a girl who has abandoned the monastic life after taking vows, but one who has returned to her worthy parents before taking vows.

10 In 'Marriage,'³⁶ how much wisdom there is about overlooking the failings of husbands, not breaking good will between married persons, making amends for injuries, improving husbands' behaviour, complying with their humors! What else do Plutarch, Aristotle, and Xenophon teach? The only difference is that here the characters add a certain liveliness to the discourse.

15 In the colloquy 'The Soldier and the Carthusian,' I depict at one stroke both the folly of young fellows who run off to war and the life of a holy Carthusian: a life inevitably gloomy and dismal unless accompanied by devotion to studies.

In 'The Liar [and the Man of Honour],' I depict the character of certain
 20 people who are born liars. There is no more detestable class of men; would they were scarcer!³⁷

In the colloquy 'The Young Man and the Harlot,' do I not make even brothels pure? What could be said more effectively, either for the purpose of impressing upon young minds the safeguarding of their chastity or for
 25 reclaiming prostitutes from a course of life as wretched as it is shameful? A single word has upset some readers, for the immodest girl, playing up to the young man, calls him her 'cocky.' But this expression is very common among us, even with respectable ladies.³⁸ Anyone who cannot bear it may write 'my darling' or anything else instead of 'cocky' if he prefers.

30 In 'The Poetic Feast,' I show what sort of feast scholars should have: frugal, but gay and mirthful; seasoned with learned stories; without quarrels, bickering, or slander.

In 'An Examination [concerning the Faith],'³⁹ I summarize the Catholic creed, and that somewhat more clearly and explicitly than is done by some
 35 highly respected theologians, including Gerson (whose name I mention with all due respect nevertheless). And I invent the character of a Lutheran in order to make it easier for those who agree on the main articles of the orthodox creed to resume good relations. The rest of the 'Examination' I omitted,⁴⁰ however, because of the bad feeling now prevalent.

40 In 'The Old Men's Chat,'⁴¹ how many things are shown, as though in a mirror, that should be avoided in life or that render life serene! Better

that young people learned these from pleasant chats than from experience. Socrates brought philosophy down from heaven to earth; I have brought it even into games, informal conversations, and drinking parties.⁴² For the very amusements of Christians ought to have a philosophical flavour.

5 In 'The Well-to-do Beggars,'⁴³ how many things are there by which country pastors – crude and unlettered, and anything but shepherds – may amend their lives! How much, in addition, to help get rid of foolish pride in clothes; again, for checking the extravagance of those who condemn the monastic garb, as if the dress in itself were bad. And incidentally a pattern
10 for the conduct of itinerant monks is described. There aren't many of the sort I picture here.

In 'The [Abbot and the] Learned Lady,'⁴⁴ at one stroke I revive the ancient example of Paula, Eustochium, and Marcella, who combined devotion to learning with purity of morals, and by the example of the young
15 wife I incite monks and abbots – haters of sacred studies, men given over to gluttony, idleness, hunting, and dicing – to pursuits of a different and, for them, more appropriate kind.

In 'The Spectre,'⁴⁵ I expose the tricks of impostors accustomed to play upon the credulous minds of simple folk by feigning apparitions of demons,
20 souls, and heavenly voices. How great a plague, truly, has this charlatanism brought upon Christian devotion! But since a naïve and simple-minded time of life is especially liable to frauds of this kind, I thought it wise to describe the method of the trickery by an amusing example. Pope Celestine was similarly imposed upon;⁴⁶ so the youth of Bern, by monks;⁴⁷ so are many
25 even today, by faked oracles.

By no means the slightest of human afflictions is alchemy,⁴⁸ a disorder so intoxicating, once it strikes a man, that it beguiles even the learned and prudent. Related to it⁴⁹ is magic, which goes by the same name but entices us by the additional title of 'natural.' I denounce similar impostures in 'The
30 Cheating Horse-Dealer' and in 'Beggar Talk'⁵⁰ and again in 'The Fabulous Feast.' If boys learn nothing else from these but how to talk Latin, how much more praise my labour deserves, for accomplishing this through jokes and entertainment, than is due to men who cram *Mammethrepti*, *Brachylogi*, *Catholicons*,⁵¹ and 'modes of signifying'⁵² down the wretched youngsters'
35 throats!

In 'The New Mother,' besides knowledge of matters physical, how many moral precepts are there about mothers' care of children: first of babies, then of older children!

In 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake,' I reproach those who with much
40 ado have thrown all images out of the churches;⁵³ also those who are mad about pilgrimages undertaken in the name of religion – something clubs,

too, are now organized for. Those who have been to Jerusalem are dubbed knights⁵⁴ and address one another as 'brother.' On Palm Sunday they behave ridiculously, dragging an ass by a rope⁵⁵ – themselves not very different from the wooden ass they pull. Those who have been to Compostella imitate them. Let these things be conceded, of course, to men's whims, but for these people to arrogate holiness to themselves from all this is intolerable. Attention is called also to those who exhibit doubtful relics for authentic ones, who attribute to them more than is proper, and basely make money by them.

In 'A Fish Diet,'⁵⁶ I take up the question of human ordinances, which some people, straying far from right reason, reject out of hand. Some put them almost above divine commandments. Others, again, abuse both divine and human ordinances for gain and arbitrary power. And so I try to persuade each group to moderation, asking where the human ordinances came from and by what degrees they have reached their present position; whom they bind and to what extent; what good they do; how much they differ from divine ones; noting, in passing, the ridiculous human judgments the world has long been filled with; noting also what has caused all this present uproar everywhere. These topics I have treated at some length, to provide learned men with an opportunity of writing on them more correctly; for what they have published to date does not satisfy thoughtful readers. To denounce whoring, drunkenness, and adultery would not touch the heart of the matter, since these evils deceive nobody. The danger to true godliness comes rather from evils that are not perceived or that entice in the guise of righteousness. If I am accused of allowing a theological argument to be carried on by lewd fellows of the baser sort,⁵⁷ the answer is that such topics are disputed by these men at every dinner party nowadays; and people of this kind need somebody who will discuss the subject informally and bluntly.

In 'The Funeral,' – since death is usually a test of Christian faith – I have portrayed in two laymen⁵⁸ a contrast in modes of dying, placing before your eyes, as though in an actual picture, the different departures from life of those who put their trust in vanities and those who have fixed their hope of salvation in the mercy of the Lord. Incidentally, I reproach the supremely silly ostentatiousness of the rich who extend their pomp and pride, which death at least should have removed, beyond the grave. At the same time I attack the wickedness of those who for their own profit take advantage of rich men's foolishness; which they ought rather to have been particularly diligent to correct.⁵⁹ For who will dare to warn the rich and powerful freely if monks, who claim to be dead to the world, whitewash those men's sins? If there are none such as I have described, still an example of what is to be avoided is shown. If, on the other hand, things far more reprehensible than

those I have presented are commonly reported, fair-minded persons should acknowledge my modesty and amend their own faults; and if blameless themselves, they should curb and correct others who do wrong. I have attacked no order,⁶⁰ unless perchance one who has uttered a warning against
 5 corrupt Christian morals impugns all Christianity! Men so sensitive about the honour of an order should be among the first to restrain those who openly disgrace the order by their deeds. Now, when they acknowledge them as blood-brothers, support and protect them, what effrontery to complain that the order's good name is harmed by a timely reproof! And what logic
 10 enjoins that you should have such regard for this or that organization that you neglect the general welfare of Christians?

In 'Things and Names,'⁶¹ I rebuke the preposterous opinions of some persons.

In 'A Feast of Many Courses,'⁶² I teach a lesson in manners.

15 In 'Charon,' I denounce war among Christians.

In 'A Meeting of the Philological Society,' I make fun of the zeal of a certain Carthusian – most erudite in his own conceit – who, though he usually raves against Greek studies in a most idiotic way, now attaches a Greek title to his own book, but in an absurd fashion; calling *anticomaritans*
 20 those whom he might have called *antimarrians* or *antidicomarians*.⁶³

In 'Cyclops,' I rebuke certain persons who always have the gospel in their mouth though in their manner of life there is nothing evangelical at all.

In 'A Marriage in Name Only,'⁶⁴ I demonstrate the folly of those numerous people who, in betrothals, count up only the dowry and take no
 25 account of the groom's pox – something worse than leprosy. And this is so commonplace nowadays that nobody wonders, despite the fact that nothing could be more cruel for children.

In 'The Knight without a Horse,'⁶⁵ I depict a class of men who think they can get away with anything under the semblance of nobility; they are a
 30 special plague to Germany.

In 'The Council of Women,' I was going to treat of some feminine failings – politely, however, so that no one would expect the sort of thing found in Juvenal! But while I was doing this, up popped the knight without a horse, like the wolf in the proverb.⁶⁶

35 The rest of the colloquies were intended to give pleasure, yet no vulgar pleasure. This is not defaming the religious orders but instructing them. Hence it would be better for all orders, both privately and publicly, if (the rage for slander laid aside) we all sincerely esteemed whatever is honestly proffered for the public good. There is diversity of gifts and tastes; men
 40 are drawn to godliness by a thousand means. Juvenus is praised for his zeal in putting the gospel story into verse.⁶⁷ Nor is Arator without his due

praise for doing the same with the Acts of the Apostles.⁶⁸ Hilary thunders against heretics,⁶⁹ Augustine disputes,⁷⁰ Jerome contends in dialogues,⁷¹ Prudentius wars in various forms of verse,⁷² Thomas and Scotus fight with the help of dialectic and philosophy.⁷³ All have the same purpose, but each
 5 uses a different method. Variety is not condemned so long as the same goal is sought. Peter of Spain⁷⁴ is taught to boys to prepare them the more readily for proceeding to Aristotle. One who instils a liking for something does much. And this little book, if taught to ingenuous youth, will lead them to many more useful studies: to poetry, rhetoric, physics, ethics, and finally
 10 to matters of Christian piety. I have played the part of a fool in making myself eulogist of my own writings, but I was forced to it, partly because of the villainy of slanderers, partly because of service to Christian youth, for whom we must do all we can.

Though this is how matters stand,⁷⁵ and though they are perfectly clear
 15 to everyone who has learned his ABCs, there is nonetheless a strangely dense class of men, called 'deputies'⁷⁶ by the French – I suppose because they are in ill repute or at least have more than sufficient reputation – who declare my *Colloquies* ought to be shunned, especially by monks (whom they style 'the religious')⁷⁷ and young people, on the ground that fasts and abstinences of
 20 the church are belittled; that intercession of the Blessed Virgin and the saints is held up to ridicule; that virginity, if compared with marriage, is regarded as of little or no importance; that everyone is dissuaded from entering religion; that in this book hard and troublesome questions of theology are propounded to beginners,⁷⁸ in violation of the oath sworn by masters of arts.
 25 You recognize, dear reader, the Attic eloquence!

To answer the last charge first, what masters of arts propound to beginners I do not know. In the *Colloquies*, what is said on Creed, mass, fasts, vows, confession has no theological difficulty but is the sort of thing no one should be ignorant of. And if Paul's Epistles are taught to boys, what is so
 30 bad about their getting a taste of theological controversy? Besides, since my critics are not unaware that boys who are novices at sophistry⁷⁹ are, from the start, given extremely puzzling questions – not to say hair-splitting questions – concerning the divine Persons, why are they unwilling for boys to learn what concerns common life? If they think it makes no difference
 35 which character says what, they realize, I suppose, how many passages are met in the Gospels and apostolic writings that – according to *this* rule – contain obvious blasphemy!

In many places I approve of fasting; nowhere do I condemn it. Whoever maintains the contrary I shall denounce as an impudent liar. 'But,' they say,
 40 'in "The Whole Duty of Youth"⁸⁰ the text reads: "With fasting I have nothing to do."' Imagine these words said in the person of a soldier or a drunkard;

does that make Erasmus a condemner of fasts? I think not! As they now stand, they are spoken by a youngster not yet grown up, of an age not required by law to fast. Nevertheless this youngster is preparing himself for suitable fasts, for he adds: 'If, however, I feel the need, I lunch and dine more
5 frugally, in order to be the keener for devotions throughout a holy day.'⁸¹

In fact, how I 'condemn' abstinences these words in 'The Profane Feast' make clear: 'In many matters it's not the fact but the intention that distinguishes us from the Jews. They used to refrain from certain foods as if from unclean things that would defile the mind. We, though we know that
10 to the pure all things are pure, nevertheless deny nourishment to the lustful flesh as if to an unruly steed, so as to render it more obedient to the spirit. Sometimes we discipline our excessive use of delicacies by the vexation of abstinence.'⁸² Shortly after this the speaker explains why the church has forbidden the eating of certain foods: everyone will benefit, he says, 'for the
15 poor may eat snails or frogs, or gnaw an onion or leek; the middle class will reduce somewhat its daily fare; but if the rich use this occasion to indulge themselves, they should blame their own gluttony and not find fault with the church's ordinance.'⁸³ A little later I say things similar to these. Again, somewhat further on: 'I'm aware that a fish diet is emphatically condemned
20 by physicians, but our forefathers, whom we are bound to obey, thought differently.'⁸⁴ Therein do I teach directly that in this matter even the slightest offence to the weak should be avoided.

Equally false is it that in the *Colloquies* intercession of the Virgin Mary and other saints is mocked.⁸⁵ But I do mock those who seek from saints
25 what they would not dare to ask of a respectable man, or seek from certain saints in the belief that this or that one would grant something or other more readily, or be able to perform it more readily, than would Christ himself. On the contrary the lad in 'The Whole Duty of Youth'⁸⁶ speaks thus: 'I gave some greetings.' 'To whom?' 'To Christ and to several saints.' And a little later:
30 'Again I salute Jesus and all the saints briefly, but particularly the Virgin Mother and my patron saints.' And further on he mentions by name which saints he daily greets.

It is surprising indeed that a suitor, a man in love, praises marriage and says that a chaste marriage is not far short of virginity in worth, when
35 Augustine prefers the polygamy of the patriarchs to our celibacy!⁸⁷

How patently absurd their criticism of entering the religious life is, my words in 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' make evident.⁸⁸ The young woman asks: 'Do you condemn the whole monastic life, then?' 'By no means,' the young man replies. 'But just as I wouldn't want to argue that a
40 girl who entered this kind of life should try to get out of it, so I wouldn't hesitate to warn all girls, particularly the talented ones, against throwing

themselves rashly into something there's no escape from afterwards.' This is the conclusion of that colloquy, however much the questions are disputed. I ask you, is this dissuading everyone from entering the religious life? Not entrance but headlong recklessness is condemned. – These passages, then,
 5 they twist maliciously for the purpose of slander.

Yet they fail to consider how many of the things beginners learn there oppose the pronouncements of the Lutherans. In 'The Whole Duty of Youth',⁸⁹ the method of hearing mass properly and profitably is described. The method of confessing properly and effectively is taught; the boy is
 10 warned to purge his soul by confession before he takes communion. In the same place beginners are taught certain Christian customs which, even though not found in Sacred Scripture, ought to be so kept that we may not be a stumbling-block to anyone. In 'The Profane Feast' they are taught to comply with pontifical ordinances rather than the advice of physicians;
 15 only they are warned that in a case of necessity a human ordinance and legislator's intention lose their force.⁹⁰ In the same place a character endorses a benefaction to monasteries, provided it is given for use, not for soft living, and especially if given to those who scrupulously observe the discipline of the religious life.⁹¹

As for human ordinances, these words are spoken in 'The Fish Diet':⁹²
 20 'Let those who want to fight do so. I myself believe the laws of our forefathers ought to be reverently received and dutifully obeyed, as though they came from God. It is neither safe nor right to conceive or sow harmful suspicion concerning public authority. And if there is some tyranny, but not enough
 25 to force us to wrongdoing, better to endure it than to oppose it seditiously.' Many things of this sort beginners learn from my *Colloquies*, about which these fellows mutter so. 'But for a theologian to crack jokes is unseemly.' At least they should grant me the right to do with boys what they, grown men, permit themselves publicly during 'Vespers' – insipid name for an insipid
 30 thing.⁹³

I have shown that the foolish slanders invented by some in Spain are mere fancies of men who are neither sober nor acquainted with Latin.⁹⁴ No less uninformed is one man's assertion that the statement in 'An Examination concerning the Faith' that the Father is called 'absolutely the author of all that
 35 are' is heretical. Taken in by his ignorance of Latin idiom, he thinks 'author' means nothing else than 'creator' or 'maker'.⁹⁵ But if he consults expert Latinists,⁹⁶ if he turns the pages of Hilary and other ancient writers, he will find *auctoritas* used for what the schoolmen call 'the supremely perfect Reason of the Beginning'; and on that account they attribute it especially to
 40 the Father, often designating the Father by the name of 'author' when they compare the Persons. Whether the Father is correctly called 'cause' of the Son

does not concern me, since I have never used this word. It is true, however, that we cannot speak of God except by inadequate terms; and 'fount' or 'beginning' or 'origin' is no more adequate than 'cause.'

- Now consider from this, reader, what sort of people they are who
 5 sometimes drag men to the flames by their condemnations. Nothing is more base than to censure what you do not understand. But this mania for slandering anything and everything – what does it produce but bitterness and dissension? Instead, let us interpret fairly judgments that differ from our own, neither desiring ours to be accepted instantly as oracles nor taking
 10 as oracles the judgments of those who do not understand what they read. Wherever bad feeling prevails in debate, there you find blind judgment. May the peacemaker among all men, the Holy Spirit, who employs his instruments in divers ways, make us all united and of one accord in sound doctrine and godly living, that we may all alike come into the fellowship of
 15 the heavenly Jerusalem, which knows no strife. Amen.

Basel, 21 May 1526⁹⁷

NOTES

- 1 Greek in the original
- 2 The 'deaf adder that stoppeth her ear' of Ps 58:4–5 (57:5–6 Vulg). Cf *Adagia* III i 85.
- 3 The Froben edition of November 1518; 'mine and not mine' because although Erasmus' work, it was brought out without his knowledge, he says, and therefore had some inaccuracies. When he speaks a few lines below of having 'revised what was published, then added' he refers to the March 1519 edition (Louvain: Martens), for which he made some corrections, and to two 1522 (March and July–August) and subsequent editions. But reprints of the original (Froben 1518) text and of those containing minor variations appeared in many places between 1518 and 1522. For details see BE 2nd series *Colloquia* 1. Authorized and fully acknowledged editions begin with the March 1522 book.
- 4 Cf n10 below.
- 5 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.3 1094b28–1095a11; cf Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (1609): 'Unlike young men, whom Aristotle thought / Unfit to hear moral philosophy' (2.2.167–8). Shakespeare's immediate source is unknown. He may have borrowed from this colloquy or from a Latin translation of Aristotle. The same passage in Latin is quoted in Bacon's *De augmentis scientiarum* 3.7 (1623). Erasmus and Bacon were correct, of course, in translating Aristotle's πολιτικῆς as *ethicae* (Erasmus) or *moralis* (Bacon) instead of 'political.' For Aristotle considered ethics and politics as two parts of one discipline. That discipline studies human happiness, described as activity in accordance with virtue, first in the individual, then in its necessary setting, the state or community. Ethics is the study of human character (ethos), politics of man in society. Inquiry into politics can be pursued fruitfully only after character is understood. But young

- men lack sufficient experience of life for this study; hence they are not ready for 'political science' either. Cf Plato *Republic* 6.498A–C.
- 6 Horace *Satires* 1.1.24–6
 - 7 The twofold purpose of the *Colloquies* as enunciated on the title-page of the book since March 1522
 - 8 See *Convivium religiosum* 'The Godly Feast' n190.
 - 9 Highly recommended by Erasmus in *De pueris instituendis* LB I 511B–F / ASD I-2 70:10–20 / CWE 26 339
 - 10 Lucretius 1.935–42. So Erasmus: Allen Ep 337:104–6 / CWE Ep 337:111–13
 - 11 *De visendo loca sacra*, alternative title for *De votis temere susceptis*
 - 12 'Is it any great feat to visit Jerusalem bodily when within you there is Sodom, Egypt, and Babylon?' (*Enchiridion* LB v 38A / Holborn 87:2–3 / CWE 66 82).
 - 13 The dubious wisdom of going on pilgrimage – so often undertaken, Erasmus complains, for the wrong reasons – is the theme of a short colloquy, 'Rash Vows' and a long one, 'A Pilgrimage.' For Erasmus to give more attention to the short one than to the long one here, in fact more attention than he bestows on any other colloquy in this apology, is surprising. One reason for dismissing 'A Pilgrimage' in a dozen lines is that that dialogue was published in February 1526, only a few months before 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*.' The longer dialogue has much description of Walsingham and Canterbury. 'Rash Vows' says little about Jerusalem (which was a disappointing place to the pilgrim) but much about the foolishness and futility of going there, as Erasmus now emphasizes again. In 'A Pilgrimage' the reader will make the proper inferences for himself.
 - 14 The duty of a bishop was to stay in his diocese, administer its affairs, and preach. See 'A Fish Diet' 711:30–4. The *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia*, a report to Pope Paul III by a special papal commission on reform of the church (1537), denounces clerical and particularly episcopal absenteeism as an evil that above all others must be corrected (Kidd *Documents* 313 no 126; Hubert Jedin *A History of the Council of Trent* trans Dom Ernest Graf OSB [Edinburgh and London 1957] I 424–33).
 - 15 Actually 1 Tim 5:8. A hard saying, but true; Erasmus agrees with St Paul (and with Aquinas; see *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* LB VI 940D–E on the interpretation of this verse). A man who for ostensibly pious reasons deserts his family and sets out for Jerusalem is a modern example of 'worse than an infidel.' Erasmus often alludes to the disastrous effects of pilgrimages on families.
 - 16 This anecdote is repeated, with attribution to Erasmus, in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* (VIII 653). One of the speakers in *Γερωντολογία* 'The Old Men's Chat' tells of accompanying an elderly nobleman to Jerusalem: another miscalculation (458:30–8 above).
 - 17 Jerome Ep 58.3 to Paulinus of Nola, written to dissuade Paulinus from making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. St Hilarion (d 371), a devout hermit dwelling in the Palestinian wilderness, saw Jerusalem only once, for a single day. That brief visit, says Jerome, was enough to prove that Hilarion did not neglect holy places and showed that he wanted to avoid any appearance of confining God to one place. Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Armenia are full of monks who have never seen Jerusalem. A true Christian can reach heaven just as easily from any other land. For Jerome's life of Hilarion see PL 23 (1883) 29–54; translation in NPNF 2nd series VI 303–15.

- 18 Jerome Ep 58.2. The quotation is not quite complete, for Jerome repeats 'in Jerusalem' after 'lived righteously.' This dictum is a memory of Cicero *Pro Murena*: 'Non Asiam numquam vidisse, sed in Asia continenter vixisse, laudandum est' (5.12). A papal official, Alvarus Pelagius (d 1352), condemning students who waste their parents' money in idleness, neglect studies, and return home ignorant, resorts to this same aphorism. "'It is praiseworthy, not to have seen Jerusalem, but to have lived well.'" So, not to have studied at Paris or Bologna, but to have done so diligently merits praise' (Thorndike *University Records* 174).
- 19 Folly claims as one of her own the man who abandons his family to go off to Compostella or Jerusalem (*Moriae encomium* LB IV 456B / ASD IV-3 138:250-1 / CWE 27 122). Throughout Christian history, pilgrimage and the figure of the pilgrim have been primal metaphors both in devotional and in secular literature and art. 'Strangers and pilgrims on the earth,' these *viatores* sought an actual or symbolic Jerusalem. The pilgrim's progress was a manifestation of effort to perform acts of penance or to venerate shrines and images of saints, or simply to enjoy a tour, however laborious, to a famous holy place. Given the mixed motives and varieties of religious and worldly types among the travellers, the misfortunes and abuses to which Erasmus calls attention were bound to occur. To a critical mind and a sceptical, satirical temperament, pilgrimages seemed inexcusable expeditions of little value and much peril to most of the people who took part in them.
- 20 In 'Rash Vows' 39:11-23; see also 'Military Affairs' 58:24-34 and 'A Pilgrimage' 635:25-636:13, with the notes.
- 21 Agents or officials who were in charge of selling indulgences (as at 'Military Affairs' 58:28-9)
- 22 A paraphrase of 'Benefices' 48:2-13
- 23 *Militis confessio*, alternative title for *Militaria*
- 24 *Monita paedagogica*, the title in some editions
- 25 *Pietas puerilis*, the alternative title of *Confabulatio pia* in some editions
- 26 See 'Youth' 96:31-97:24 with the notes.
- 27 On choosing a career, 98:39-99:7; on choosing a confessor, 97:25-35
- 28 A desideratum often mentioned by Erasmus; for example Allen Epp 1747:105, 1891:214-18, 2037:179-80, 2700:109-11; *De concordia* LB V 498D; *Institutio christiani matrimonii* LB V 647E; *De esu carnium* LB IX 1201A-B; see introduction to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 279-85; 'The Funeral' n26. More was of the same opinion; see *Utopia* Yale CWM 4 130-31.
- 29 On the subjects mentioned, see 'The Profane Feast' 143:15-146:7. Cf Erasmus' later comments on this colloquy at 1107:6-22.
- 30 Here called simply *Apotheosis*
- 31 Although named together here, they are irreconcilable as authors for youth in school; Erasmus accepts Plautus but rejects Poggio Bracciolini. The comedies of Plautus – those that were 'free from impropriety' – are well suited to young readers (*De ratione studii* CWE 24 669:10-12). The *Facetiae* of Poggio (d 1459), a brilliant scholar with a taste for writing irreverent and indecent anticlerical tales (*impia* and *spurca*, as Erasmus says in Allen Ep 337:335-6) would not be acceptable in any Erasmusian curriculum intended for grammar-school boys. Plautus was a pagan; Poggio might be assumed to have been a nominal Christian. Pagan literature, Greek and Latin, played a major part in Renaissance

curricula, but some educators (Colet was one), while accepting the fact, were uneasy about how to justify it. Erasmus dealt with this problem more than once. His defence of the classical curriculum, partisan but rational, was typical of the arguments repeated by humanists over many generations: ancient literature was uniquely appropriate as the foundation of liberal education, but the texts taught must be suitable to the age of the pupils, and the master must know what to omit in Lucian or Terence or the lyric poets and how to treat a text with tact (*Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* LB IX 92D–E). *Antibarbari* and *De ratione studii* are good examples, historically and pedagogically, of humanist and specifically Erasmian arguments for classical education. See also CWE 23 introduction xxvi–xxxii, xliii–xlvi. *De ratione studii* provides practical advice to teachers on how to approach a Terentian comedy and Virgil's second eclogue (CWE 24 682–90).

- 32 *Virgo misogamos*. Here and at 1102:10, 1103:5, 1103:30, 1104:10, 1107:37, Erasmus transliterates Greek titles.
- 33 A parody of the familiar phrase *nulla salus extra ecclesiam*; see 'Faith' n108 and 'A Fish Diet' n74.
- 34 On this and related subjects he did so many times. See the references in the introduction and notes to 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage.'
- 35 'The Repentant Girl'
- 36 *Mempsigamos*, transliteration of the Greek title ('complaining of marriage') used as an alternative title for *Coniugium*
- 37 would they were scarcer!] Added in March 1529. The colloquy is here called simply *Pseudochei*.
- 38 The word in question was appropriate in its context (382:9). Sexual language or allusion in serious contexts (including Scripture) is another matter, on which Erasmus writes interestingly in *Purgatorio adversus epistolam Lutheri* LB X 1548C–1550C.
- 39 Here called simply *Inquisitio*
- 40 On this statement see my edition of *Inquisitio de fide* 35–8.
- 41 *Senile colloquium*, alternative name for Γερωντολογία
- 42 A proverb about our inability to penetrate the secrets of the heavens, 'What is above us does not concern us,' was quoted by Socrates, according to Lactantius (*Divinae institutiones* 3.20 PL 6 416; see *Adagia* I vi 69 and Allen Ep 1334:177–98 / CWE Ep 1334:189–212). Lactantius adds that if Socrates meant that therefore we may ignore the creator of heaven and earth, he made a deplorable mistake. Erasmus repeats the proverb in Allen Ep 1572:65, but there credits Plutarch with bringing moral philosophy into households. Recalling that remark of April 1525 about Plutarch, Erasmus now, in May 1526, says he himself, through his *Colloquies*, has brought philosophy into 'games, informal conversations, and drinking parties.' 'Our daily conversations show us as we are' (*Paraclesis* LB V 140C or VI *3 verso / Holborn 142:24–5).
- 43 *Ptochoplusii*, a transliteration of the Greek title
- 44 Here called *Erudita puella*. On Paula and Eustochium, aristocratic Roman ladies who became Christians and followed Jerome to Palestine, see n28. Marcella, whose Roman background was like theirs, remained in Rome. Most of what is known of these women, all of whom are saints, is learned from Jerome's correspondence; see especially his Epp 22, 108, 127.

- 45 'Exorcism,' here given its alternative title, *Spectrum*
- 46 This pope was tricked twice, but which experience Erasmus has in mind is uncertain. Celestine had been, and hoped to continue to be, a hermit monk. In July 1294, however, at the age of eighty-five, he was elected pope through the efforts of a group of cardinals and wholly against his own wishes. As pope, Celestine was totally incompetent and quickly became eager to abdicate. For papal abdication no precedents were known, but he was persuaded that such precedents did exist. Celestine then resigned (December 1294). His successor was cardinal Benedetto Gaetani, who became Boniface VIII. The new pope put Celestine in confinement, where he spent the rest of his life. He died in 1296 and was canonized in 1313. Dante places him in the anteroom of hell, presumably because of his 'great refusal,' which enabled Dante's enemy Boniface VIII to reign as pope (*Inferno* 3.58–61). Boniface is, or will be, in worse straits (*Inferno* 19.40–60).
- 47 Probably an allusion to Johann Jetzer, who was twenty-three when he joined the Dominicans of Bern as a lay brother in 1506 and was the central figure in the scandal concerning the Dominicans there. See 'The Seraphic Funeral' n51.
- 48 *Alcumistica*, capitalized in the first and other editions of this apology; apparently intended to identify both the title of the colloquy ('Alchemy') and the 'disorder' described in it
- 49 Related to it ... 'natural.'] In the first edition (June 1526) this sentence precedes 'By no means ... prudent,' but it belongs here, as in the edition of March 1533, *Opera omnia* 1540, and LB. Natural magic is 'white magic,' which does not invoke the devil or other evil spirits, as witchcraft or 'black magic' does. On magic in the sixteenth century see notes and references in 'Alchemy'; chapter 3 of Wayne Shumaker's *The Occult Sciences in the Renaissance* 108–59 discusses white magic.
- 50 *Ptochologia*, a transliteration of the Greek title
- 51 On these medieval lexicons and grammars, which Erasmus enjoys mocking, see 'The Philological Society' nn7 and 10.
- 52 Erasmus refers to authors and teachers of what he finds desperately dreary treatises on speculative grammar, for example Michael Modista and Peter of Spain, who are concerned to explain and justify by logic the differences between parts of speech. (On Peter of Spain see n74 below.) Erasmus, as one would expect, was more interested in using traditional grammar correctly for accurate reading and writing than in overwhelming it (and the youthful students) with logic and dialectic. See *Antibarbari* CWE 23 34:2n. Chomarat's summary of Michael Modista and modes of signifying in *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 215–24 is the most useful exposition for readers of Erasmus.
- 53 See 'A Pilgrimage' n25 on Zwinglian hostility to images.
- 54 *equites aurati*; see 'The Funeral' n72. Doubtless an allusion to a confraternity, but which one is unknown.
- 55 The procession with the ass commemorates the entry of Christ into Jerusalem (Matt 21:1–9; John 12:12–15). On a scandalous, profane procession on Palm Sunday see 'A Fish Diet' 707:25–708:11.
- 56 *Ichthyophagia*, a transliteration of the Greek title. This exceptionally important dialogue was first printed in the February 1526 edition.

- 57 This familiar phrase (Acts 17:5 AV) matches the tenor of Erasmus' *personis sordidis*, referring to the butcher and salt fish seller in 'A Fish Diet.' For theirs are vulgar trades (Cicero *De officiis* 1.42.150; Terence *Eunuchus* 257).
- 58 *idiotis*. Sometimes *idiotae* has this meaning, depending on context. So *Supputatio* LB IX 636C–D.
- 59 A biographer writes of the description of George's dying in 'The Funeral': 'It is hardly conceivable that any such scene was ever enacted at any bedside in any Christian land' (J.J. Mangan *Life, Character and Influence of Desiderius Erasmus* 2 vols [New York 1927] II 142). Objections of this kind are nothing new; they were made in Erasmus' lifetime. They ignore what he says here: that he has pictured the kinds of dying described in the dialogue *ut imagine viva* 'as though in an actual picture.' The colloquy is fiction, not reported fact; yet it is truthful representation according to Erasmus' purpose and belief. To censure it as literally untrue is like dismissing the laws and customs of the Utopians because Utopia does not exist. If no such friars as he depicts really exist, Erasmus says, he has at any rate shown what should be avoided; and if any do exist, then good friars ought to thank him for exposing the bad ones.
- 60 Not untrue but less than the whole truth. He never attacks an order as such, but the words and behaviour of some of the friars and monks in his dialogues do nothing to dispel unfavourable inferences about their societies. Some of his sixteenth-century readers rejected such inferences outright; others found that the characters and characterizations in question confirmed their own opinions or surmises.
- 61 In 'Things and Names' . . . instructing them.] Added in the March 1529 edition. The colloquies named in these lines appeared in the 1527 and March 1529 editions; see the introductions to them. 'Charon,' however, had been first printed in 1523 but not in the *Colloquies*. See the introduction to it 818–19. 'Things and Names' is here called *Differentia verborum ac rerum*.
- 62 Here called *Convivium varium*
- 63 See 'The Philological Society' n3
- 64 Here called *Coniugium impar*, its alternative title
- 65 Here called *Ementita nobilitas*, its alternative title
- 66 *Adagia* IV v 50, perhaps implying that he interrupted the writing of 'The Council of Women' to write 'The Knight without a Horse' or wrote it immediately afterwards. In the order of printing the latter comes first.
- 67 Juvenius was a Christian Latin poet (early fourth century). He versified the four Gospels (first printed at Deventer c 1490 and often reissued). Erasmus approved of the work, and Colet wanted such authors read in St Paul's School (see CWE 23 xxx–xxxi).
- 68 Arator was an Italian Christian Latin writer (sixth century). His *De actis apostolorum* (text in PL 68 63–250) narrates the deeds of Peter and Paul. It was popular in the Middle Ages.
- 69 Especially in his *De Trinitate*, opposing the Arians. See Ep 1334, Erasmus' introduction to his edition of Hilary (Basel 1523). Like his editions of Augustine and Jerome, it was published by the Froben house.
- 70 In his controversies with the Manichaeans, Donatists, and Pelagians
- 71 For instance, against the Pelagians, Vigilantius, Helvidius, Jovinianus, and others

- 72 Prudentius was a contemporary (348–c 410) of Augustine and Jerome, best known as a writer of hymns, some of which are still used, and of *Psychomachia*, an allegory of the spiritual life. Erasmus, who considered Prudentius the most fluent of Christian poets (*De ratione studii* LB I 523E / CWE 24 675:5–6) and ‘our Pindar’ (LB V 1340A / CWE 29 176), wrote commentaries on two of his poems (LB V 1337C–1358C / CWE 29 125–218).
- 73 Thomas Aquinas is seldom named in the *Colloquies*, but Erasmus refers to him many times in his *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum*, usually with respect, though he laments Thomas’ weakness in Greek, a handicap that diminished his value as an exegete. But he is certainly better than Lyra and other biblical commentators of his times. See *Capita argumentorum contra morosos quosdam ac indoctos* LB VI ***1 verso and ‘The Godly Feast’ n190. On Scotus see the same note.
- 74 Medieval scholar and prelate (d 1277). He taught medicine in Siena, then rose in the church to become cardinal bishop of Tusculum; he was elected pope as John XXI (XX) in 1276. His *Parva logicalia* or *Summulae logicales* was used as a textbook for four centuries (*Petri Hispani Summulae logicales* ed I.M. Bocheński OP [Turin 1947] and, more recently, *Peter of Spain [Petrus Hispanus Portugalsensis]: Tractatus, called afterwards Summule logicales* ed L.M. De Rijk [Assen 1972]). Its subtleties and aridity invited the disparagement of later humanists, including Erasmus (Allen Ep 447:97–9 / CWE Ep 447:103–5) and More (*Correspondence* 38–42). See Clarence Miller’s note in his edition of *Moriae encomium* ASD IV-3 156:501n (page 157).
- 75 Though this is how matters stand . . . judgment.] The passage from here to 1109:11 was added in the September 1529 edition.
- 76 Representatives of the faculty of theology who reported in the presence of the masters their judgments on the *Colloquies* and other writings of Erasmus in May 1526. For the official statement to which Erasmus refers here, see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 928E–929B; cf *Collectio iudiciorum de novis erroribus* . . . ed C. du Plessis d’Argentré, 3 vols (Paris 1728–36; repr Brussels 1966) II part 1 53–77, and for the 1526 condemnation, *ibidem* 47–52.
- 77 Idiomatic for members of religious orders. Erasmus discusses the term in *Ecclesiastes* LB V 1022D–1023A; *Supputatio* LB IX 615D–E, 714B–C.
- 78 *grammaticuli*, as a few lines below and at 1108:6, 1108:11, 1108:26
- 79 *sophistices candidatis*. The same phrase is used in *De copia* CWE 24 304:6 for aspirants to *copia*. Compare Quintilian’s *candidatus eloquentiae* (12.2.27). In academic parlance ‘sophistry’ was the study of sophistic logic, the ‘sophistical elenchi’ in Aristotle’s treatise of that name. For some examples see ‘The Poetic Feast’ 400:32–404:9. Erasmus thought boys should learn the elements of logic, which was the third part of the trivium, but warns against too much of this or other branches of formal philosophy for young people (1097:16–18, 1098:10–11 above). See More’s critique of dialectic in his letter to Maarten van Dorp (1515) defending Erasmus’ *Moriae encomium* (Yale CWM 15 14/15–38/9). The humanists generally shared this conviction about the dangerous prevalence of excessive cultivation of formal logic in youth. A master at Magdalen School, Oxford, wrote (c 1500): ‘It is an hevye case that Childernn in their best age and metist to lurne grammer shall be take from yt and be sett to sophistre . . . Ther be many nowadays goth to sophistre the which can scant speke thre wordys in

- latyn' (*A Fifteenth Century School Book* ed William Nelson [Oxford 1956] 19 nos 75–6).
- 80 Here called *Pietas puerilis*. See 'Youth' 96:14.
- 81 'Youth' 96:16–18
- 82 'The Profane Feast' 143:32–7. Cf 1101:1–10 above.
- 83 'The Profane Feast' 144:15–18
- 84 'The Profane Feast' 145:9–11
- 85 Critics cited 'The Shipwreck' (see n19) and 'A Pilgrimage.'
- 86 *Puerilis pietas*; see 'Youth' 91:6–8, 92:20–1, 93:4–5.
- 87 This ironical comparison between Pamphilus' praise of marriage in 'Courtship' (265:20–267:15) and Augustine's comments on polygamy is less than fair to Augustine, since it ignores the differences in purpose and manner between the colloquy, a work of imagination and wit, and Augustine's totally serious passage on polygamy. Erasmus may be thinking of Augustine's short treatise *De bono coniugali* 26.34–5, where chastity and continence are exalted (PL 40 395–6). The good of marriage, we are told there, is its fruitfulness, never the sensuality or lust which, since the sin of Adam and Eve, has infected the human race. Another commendation of polygamy can be found in *De doctrina christiana* (3.12.20 PL 34 73–4), where Augustine emphasizes, as other theologians did, that polygamy was permitted in early Hebrew society because of the divine injunction to 'be fruitful and multiply' (Gen 1:28; 35:11). In those times, when the world was young, fecundity was necessary, and polygamy practised accordingly – by men only, for women could have only one living husband. But had devout men of old lived at the time the gospel of Christ was proclaimed, they would have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake (*De doctrina christiana* 3.18.27 PL 34 76).
- Jerome had some difficulties with Solomon's seven hundred wives (1 Kings [3 Kings Vulg] 11:3), but here too the key to interpretation is the distinction between Law and gospel. It is one thing to live under the law, another to live under the gospel (*Adversus Iovinianum* 1.24 PL 23 [1883] 254–5). This world will not long endure; 'the time is short . . . they that have wives be as though they had none' (1 Cor 7:29). Polygamy was acceptable for the patriarchs, for David and Solomon and some others, but no longer. The Christian church sanctified monogamous marriage, yet from patristic times prized virginity as a superior state. Erasmus' friend Colet agreed; see 'Courtship' nn53, 59. Erasmus did not. He could even argue that the holiest (*sanctissimum*) kind of life was chaste and pure marriage (*De conscribendis epistolis* LB I 419D / CWE 25 137; *De vidua christiana* LB V 734C–735D / CWE 201–3). For his opinions on such topics see the 'Courtship,' 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage,' 'Marriage,' 'The Young Man and the Harlot,' 'The New Mother,' 'A Marriage in Name Only,' and 'The Well-to-Do Beggars' (n6 on sacerdotal celibacy).
- 88 *Virgo misogynamo*; see 'The Girl with No Interest in Marriage' 293:9–13.
- 89 *Puerilis pietas*; see 'Youth' 95:3–96:12 (on hearing mass), 96:31–97:35 (on confession).
- 90 See 'The Profane Feast' 144:38–145:11, 145:31–2.
- 91 Not in 'The Profane Feast' but 'The Godly Feast' 199:33–6
- 92 The title is given in Greek. See 'A Fish Diet' 702:17–22.

- 93 Not the canonical Hour (Evensong) but an important academic occasion for disputations and related ceremonies for those qualifying for admission as doctors of theology (at Oxford and Paris) or masters of arts (Oxford). It brought with it access to the privileges of professional status (see Farge *Orthodoxy and Reform* 27–8). *Vesperia* were prolonged, difficult, and sometimes captious, even frivolous – hence Erasmus’ dismissal of them as insipid. He had little patience with what he regarded as the tiresome pretentiousness of academic pomp. See Hastings A. Rashdall *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* (Oxford 1895), new ed F.M. Powicke and A.B. Emden, 3 vols (Oxford 1936) I 460–2 (on Paris), III 70 (on Oxford).
- 94 This paragraph alludes to ‘Faith’ (which is here called *Symbolum*) 428:30–40.
- 95 The reference is to an unnamed theologian of Paris (Allen Ep 2466:195–202).
- 96 Such as Valla, who says *auctor* does mean ‘maker’ (*factor*) but shows that it has additional though related meanings as well (*Paraphrasis in Elegantias Vallae* ASD I-4 226:504–11). Cf ‘The Epicurean’ n75.
- 97 Unfortunately this date was not changed in later editions to make allowance for additions to this apology. See nn61 and 75 above.

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ERASMUS AND ERASMIUS

THE RETURN TO BASEL

EDITIONS OF THE *COLLOQUIES*

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF THE COLLOQUIES

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GENERAL INDEX

On Erasmus' godson, Johannes Erasmus Froben, to whom the *Colloquia* was dedicated in 1522 and again in 1524 (Epp 1262 and 1476), see 'Sport' n37. 'Erasmus' is a character in three early dialogues and a later one: first in the section of 'Sport' (1522) called 'The game of sending a ball through an iron ring'; then in 'The Whole Duty of Youth' (1522), 'The Profane Feast' (1522), and 'The Art of Learning' (1529). In 'Sport' and 'The Art of Learning' the name is correct and appropriate. In 'The Whole Duty of Youth' it is erroneous, I believe, and was corrected in a later edition. In 'The Profane Feast' it must be accepted, since there is no evidence that it was unintended, and it was never changed; but its appropriateness there can be challenged.

In the earliest printed text of 'The Whole Duty of Youth,' which appeared in March 1522, and the later edition of July or August 1522, the name of Gaspar's questioner is Erasmus. Those readers of the dedicatory preface who were acquainted with Erasmus or the senior Froben, like many readers afterwards, apparently assumed that the Erasmus in this colloquy was named for the printer's son. This inference was natural but involved difficulties, for Gaspar's inquisitor asks pointed questions, and he comments favourably on the youth's conduct and piety, in the manner of a mature person, older than Gaspar. In the exchange between 'Erasmus' and Gaspar in 'Sport,' some pages earlier, both speakers are unmistakably schoolboys. Gaspar in 'The Whole Duty of Youth' is sixteen years old. The other and older speaker, who has informed opinions (based on personal experience) about confession, keeps up with theological disputes, and knows John Colet 'as well as I know you,' cannot be a schoolboy. He is Erasmus Roterodamus.

The reading 'Erasmus' in 'The Whole Duty of Youth' rests on a single occurrence of that name in each of the 1522 editions. The name is spelled out only in the line below the title; thereafter the speakers are identified only as 'E' and 'G.' 'Erasmus' was retained until the final edition issued in Erasmus' lifetime (March 1533), where it was sensibly changed to 'Erasmus' in the line below the title. The 1540 *Opera omnia* and LB texts print 'Erasmus' and abbreviate by 'Er.' Preserved Smith argued that the change of 'Erasmus' to 'Erasmus' spoiled the appropriateness of the questions and answers (Key 6n). I believe it makes the dialogue more convincing. True, the questioner says at the end of the conversation that he will try to imitate the edifying practices Gaspar has described. These words, however, are not the moral resolutions of an emulous companion but the polite if slightly patronizing approval of a sympathetic adult.

In 'The Profane Feast' the names have a different history: the earliest printed text (1518) had 'Erasmus,' but this was changed in 1522 to 'Erasmus.' When names so similar in spelling do not seem to fit the context, it may be tempting to suspect that one occurrence of the word or words in question may have been a compositor's error which, once made, was repeated by the same compositor's faithful copying of his own mistake or by other compositors' repetition of the same error. In dealing with early printed texts such suspicion is sometimes justified, sometimes not, or must be judged 'not proven.' 'The Profane Feast' provides an instructive example at pages 139:22, 140:6, 147:9, 15, 20 of this translation, where the vocative case is used. In the 1518 text Erasmus himself takes part and is addressed in the required vocative, 'Erasmus.' Bierlaire called attention to the fact that in the five places where the 1518 text prints 'Erasmus,' the first completely authentic editions of the *Colloquia*, March and July–August 1522, print 'Erasmus,' vocative of second-declension proper

names ending in *-ius*; in this instance of 'Erasmus'.¹ Elsewhere these editions identify the name as 'Er,' 'E,' or 'Eras.' Accordingly and properly, the ASD editors expand these abbreviations to 'Erasmus' wherever they occur in the colloquy (though in the dedication of the March 1522 edition to Erasmus, his name is misspelled 'Eramio,' an apt reminder of compositorial frailty).

'Erasmus' then is the established reading in 'The Profane Feast.' If the change from 'Erasmus' and 'Erasmus' to 'Erasmus' and 'Erasmio' was made by Erasmus, as we must assume, it should be accepted as authoritative. Since his dedicatory preface of 1522, addressed to Erasmus Froben, refers to schooling his pen and sentiments 'to suit your tender years' (Ep 1262), it is clear that he wished to honour his godson and to guide him towards grammar and godliness. What is not so clear is why he thought Erasmus would be a suitable member of the company in 'The Profane Feast.' We are asked to regard Erasmus, who was a mere lad in 'Sport,' an older boy but still a youth in 'The Whole Duty of Youth,' as a well-read, witty speaker who in 'The Profane Feast' banters on equal terms with the other guests. This may or may not be credible; but that Thomas More, who arrived unexpectedly, would wish to see Erasmus, not Erasmus, strains verisimilitude. If such an incongruous incident is not an oversight, it must be an example of the author's plan of having 'elegant young gentlemen' (*pueros aut bellos homunculos*) as speakers in his 1522 dialogues (Allen Ep 1301:17-19 / CWE Ep 1301:39). Whatever the explanation, the name of the speaker is Erasmus. The words are his; the substance is pure Erasmus. The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.²

NOTES

- 1 F. Bierlaire 'La première édition reconnue des *Colloques* d'Erasmus' *Les études classiques* 37 (1969) 47 and *Erasmus et ses Colloques* 46-7. The five places are: in the March 1522 edition h2 verso, h3 recto, h7 verso, h8 recto; in the July-August 1522 edition g6 verso, g7 recto, h4 verso, h5 recto; in ASD I-3 202:2505, 203:2530, 209:2739, 2744, 2749.
- 2 At one time Erasmus preferred the name 'Erasmus' for himself. In 1495 he used 'Herasmus Rotterdam' in addressing a letter (Allen Ep 45), but 'Erasmus' was the usual form. At times he wished he had used the form 'Erasmus.' So we are told by Beatus Rhenanus; see Allen I 70:545-79, and Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle 'The Eponyms of Desiderius Erasmus' *Renaissance Quarterly* 30 (1977) 12-23. He is called Erasmus (in Greek) by Henricus Glareanus in September 1516 (Allen Ep 463:70) and signs himself Erasmus (in Greek) in February 1517 (Allen Ep 539:11). In March 1517 he is Erasmon (in Greek) in a letter to Andrea Ammonio (Allen Ep 551:16). In his first few years the boy Erasmus Froben was called Erasmus, not Erasmus, but by 1522 his name had been changed to Erasmus (Allen Ep 635:20n).

THE RETURN TO BASEL

In Erasmus' colloquy 'The Funeral,' the conduct and discourse of Cornelius as he calmly awaits death testify to his steadfastness and religious faith; they delineate the Erasmian conception of how a pious Christian life should close. Cornelius is representative of a type of layman – the Christian gentleman – whom we have met earlier in 'The Godly Feast.' That Cornelius' judgments are Erasmus' own, not merely those of a character created by him, is confirmed by comparing what is said and done in the pages on Cornelius' death with the expositions or arguments in Erasmus' writings on the New Testament, the Psalms, and many other texts: *Enchiridion*, *Ratio verae theologiae*, *Paraclesis*, *Exomologesis*, *De concordia*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Modus orandi Deum*, *Explanatio symboli*, *De praeparatione ad mortem*, besides an early and minor *Declamatio de morte*. *De praeparatione ad mortem* is a perfect example of the popular genre known as *ars moriendi*, which the early printers and booksellers could readily provide. But many treatments of dying and death can be found in the equally popular though less formal pages of the *Colloquies*, *Adagia*, and letters. 'The Funeral' has pages of satirical comedy exposing the absurd and even vicious efforts of a dying man, George Balearicus, who tries to bribe his way into heaven. He dies with a Franciscan robe laid upon him, hoping thus to share in the mercies shown to the devout. (Burial in a monk's or friar's dress is one of the main topics in 'The Seraphic Funeral.') The contrast between such scenes and the edifying death of Cornelius is unmistakable, as the author intended it should be. See his paragraph on that colloquy in 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*' 1104:29–1105:11.

This appendix is directed to those who may have wondered what Erasmus' own end was like and how it fits the pattern of his life. What is known of his last days? Enough to satisfy curiosity about his mature religious convictions and his moral character. 'The Funeral' is only one of many pieces of evidence, and fiction at that, but if we take the affirmations of Cornelius as true to certain fundamental beliefs of Erasmus, they make it easy and instructive to compare a death in fiction with a death in fact. When reading contemporary accounts of Erasmus' own death, we are perforce aware of the differences between an imagined death and the hard and painful end of one who, though he had good friends in Basel, was dying in what he now thought was the wrong place.

Despite its modest size (population said to be about 10,000 in 1501, the year when Basel joined the Swiss Confederation), Basel was an ancient city founded by Romans, an important centre of trade, and a place of many proud traditions. It was an episcopal see as early as the seventh century, the site of the Council of Basel (1431–49), of a university (1460), of a beautiful cathedral (the original structure was consecrated in 1019). Hans Holbein the Younger lived there for some years. An important advantage for Erasmus was the flourishing printing and publishing industry there. Basel had more than seventy print shops. Some of its leading printers are still well known to everyone concerned with the history of books in the Renaissance. Johann Amerbach settled in Basel in 1478 and soon became a leading printer of works of scholarship. Johann Froben, Erasmus' friend and favourite publisher, arrived later but in time won a comparable reputation as an enterprising printer and bookseller. These two men produced many editions, texts, translations, commentaries, and studies of classical and patristic authors, theologians, and the like: books of and for *studia humanitatis*, *bonae literae* – the humanities or liberal-arts subjects. When Johann Froben died (1527),

his son Hieronymus carried on the business. Johannes Petri and his nephew Adam were also great printers. Adam was one of the main printers of Luther's writings, including his German Bible. Froben's specialty was Greek and Latin books, Petri's was vernacular texts.

Erasmus lived in Basel longer than in any other city. It was his chosen home from November 1521 to April 1529 and again from June 1535 to July 1536. Basel was a civilized place, but it was not Utopia. Like other Swiss cities, notably Zürich, Basel in the 1520s experienced social, economic, and religious disputes, disorders that shocked the community. Winds of doctrine from Wittenberg and Zürich fanned by Luther, Zwingli, and their adherents soon reached Basel. When Johann Froben brought out a collection of writings by Luther (1518, 1519), Erasmus urged him not to do so again, and Froben reluctantly took this advice. By 1520–1 the formal and assumed unity of Christendom began to seem to Erasmus and to others who shared his anxieties to be in danger of fracture. He was equally anxious about public disorders. He often alludes to these difficulties in his correspondence of the 1520s. One friend and sometime colleague (he had assisted Erasmus' edition of the Greek New Testament by checking the Hebrew in the notes and by reading proofs), Johannes Oecolampadius, returned to Basel in 1522. He became the acknowledged leader of the reformers and was appointed professor of theology in the university (along with Conradus Pellicanus).

Tensions and disruptions of civic and religious life in Basel during that decade came to a climax at the end of 1528 and in the early weeks of 1529. On 8 February 1529, 800 guildsmen meeting in the Franciscan church elected a committee to submit proposals to the city government for both ecclesiastical and economic reforms. They wanted a more democratic government. They demanded, successfully, the resignation or dismissal of the twelve Catholic members of the Little Council. Next day they marched to the churches, including the cathedral, and smashed or burned or removed images and church treasures.¹ Temporarily all the churches were closed and whitewashed. The mass was abolished in all homes and churches, but Protestant services were held in the city and in villages. A new church order was prepared and approved. Oecolampadius was the first Protestant preacher in the minster, the first head preacher (*antistes*) of the Basel Reformed church.

The consequence of this brief revolution was that Basel, by the popular will (or so it seemed), became a predominantly Protestant city. Erasmus had been asked for advice. Predictably, he argued for peace and toleration. He deplored the violence. He sympathized with the intentions of moderate reformers but pleaded, as he always did in disputes, for *concordia*. He realized, however, that in the prevailing circumstances Basel was no longer a place where he could work comfortably. He accepted invitations to move to Freiburg im Breisgau, settled there in April 1529, and resumed his 'Herculean labours' (see *Adagia* III i 1), producing *De concordia* in 1533, *De praeparatione ad mortem* in 1534, and his great treatise on preaching, *Ecclesiastes*, in 1535. He continued his work on Origen, which was issued by the Froben firm in September 1536 after Erasmus' death. For the reader of 'The Funeral,' *De praeparatione ad mortem* has the special interest of recording Erasmus' last meditations on this most solemn of subjects.

By the spring of 1535, Basel having recovered from its civil disturbances, Erasmus, now tired of Freiburg, was ready to return. He had thought of going back to Brabant or to Burgundy (Besançon), but finally decided on Basel, where he had old friends and was highly esteemed. He moved back there in late May or early June

1535 to Hieronymus Froben's house 'zum Luft' on Bäumleingasse, not far from the minster. This was to be his home for what remained of his life. His earliest surviving letter after his return is dated 18 June 1535 (Allen Ep 3025:18n and see Ep 3028:17–20). He was too ill to wish to go anywhere else, though he was troubled, as he wrote in his last extant letter, by the prospect of dying in a reformed (Protestant) city: 'Because of dissensions over doctrines I would prefer to end my life somewhere else' (Allen Ep 3130:26–8; cf Ep 3049:75–113). On 12 February 1536 he signed his third and final will (printed in Allen xi 363–5 Appendix 25).²

The first will (22 January 1527; Allen vi 503–6 Appendix 19) contemplated publication of his collected writings and included twenty names of institutions and individuals that were to receive complimentary copies. After expenses were paid and gifts distributed, the remainder of the estate would go to charity. The second will (November 1533) is lost. The third will made no provision for an edition of his works, apparently because Erasmus was discouraged by the successes of Lutherans, Zwinglians, and other disturbers of the peace of the church, and by the failure of all his own efforts to persuade extremists to end the schism. Towards the end of his life, however, he was changing his mind about an edition of his *opera omnia*. After his death his heir and confidant Bonifacius Amerbach, executor of his will, with the assistance of Hieronymus Froben and Nicolaus Episcopius (co-executors of the will and partners in the Froben printing and publishing firm) revived plans for issuing the collected works.³ Beatus Rhenanus also was named as a co-executor in the first will but not again in the final will. He was however a very important colleague in the planning of the *Opera omnia* of 1538–41 and is believed to have supervised the preparation of that edition. He had an unrivalled knowledge of Erasmus as an author and of his connections with the Froben press.

As Erasmus notes in his first will, he had sold his library in December 1525 to Jan Łaski, a Polish friend. By mutual agreement Erasmus had use of the books as long as he lived. They were sent off to Łaski in December 1536. The third will leaves gifts, mostly monetary, to a dozen friends. It stipulates, as the first did, that what was left over should be used to aid old or infirm persons, young men of good promise, and respectable young women who needed work.⁴

Erasmus died distinctly wealthy, with a net worth of 5,000 florins (Rhenish?), a total estate of 8,000 florins including property in Brabant, jewellery, and other possessions (Allen xi 362–3 Appendix 25). Most of this wealth, thanks largely to Bonifacius Amerbach's prudent management, became a trust for the support of worthy students at the University of Basel, and for many generations this fund helped needy students. At various times Erasmus had deposited sums of money, totalling 1,960 gold florins, with his friend Conradus Goclenius of Louvain. Whether this money was intended as an outright gift or a deed of trust to be used in Brabant as Erasmus apparently desired – for charitable purposes – is uncertain. When Goclenius died intestate in 1539, his relatives, the University of Louvain, and the treasury of Brabant all laid claim to the money. Amerbach, as the main executor of Erasmus' estate, advised the university to use the money for assisting the poor, and evidently some, perhaps most of it, was used to that end, though the Goclenius family tried for a long time to get control of it (see Allen x 406–24 Appendix 23).⁵

Of the various accounts of Erasmus' last days, the most reliable is that in Bonifacius Amerbach's preface, dated 1 February 1537 (Allen Ep 3141 / LB I *** * 4 recto-verso), to the *Catalogi duo* of Erasmus' writings, an 'official' listing of the

authentic works:⁶ Amerbach was Erasmus' closest friend. In his first will Erasmus named him his legal heir and Basilius Amerbach (d 1535), Beatus Rhenanus, and Hieronymus Froben executors (Allen vi 503:5–7 Appendix 19). In Basel, where he was a confidential advisor to the city government and (from 1525) professor of law at the university, Bonifacius was a highly respected and influential citizen. Devout, erudite, and tolerant, he was a superior specimen of the Erasmian humanist. In religion he was conservative enough to withhold approval and support from the more radical reformers, yet sympathetic with some of their purposes. After long deliberation he joined the Reformed church (1534 or 1535), submitting to the town council in 1534 a carefully composed *confessio fidei*, which the council accepted as sufficiently orthodox on the Eucharist (a crucial question) and left Amerbach with enough independence on other questions to keep his opinions to himself or to revise them in the light of further knowledge or judgment; the text of this *confessio fidei* (printed in AK IV 477–9) is well worth study. In the preface to the *Catalogi duo*, Amerbach, after eloquent eulogy of Erasmus, describes how gout, in addition to his old troubles with kidney stone, confined him to bed for much of the time. In this extremely painful condition he nevertheless wrote *De puritate tabernaculi sive ecclesiae christianae* (LB v 293A–328), an exposition of Ps 15 (14 Vulg), published by Froben in the spring of 1536. He continued to work at Origen until he was exhausted – for dysentery added still another affliction – and now he simply awaited death. He spoke of the many tokens of divine mercy, 'with his feelings so fixed on Christ that he uttered nothing but the sweet name of Jesus,' repeatedly imploring mercy, begging that the end might come. 'With such holy words, shortly before midnight on 11 July he gave up his soul to the Saviour invoked so often from the depths of his heart' (Allen Ep 3141:72–105).

How many persons were actually present when Erasmus died, and who these were, is not known beyond the shadow of a doubt, but there is every reason to believe that Bonifacius Amerbach, Hieronymus Froben, and Nicolaus Episcopius were there (Allen I 54:41–61); possibly Johann Herwagen too. Luther heard that Simon Grynaeus, a much commended classical scholar and reformer, well acquainted with Erasmus, was at the deathbed. This report came from Wolfgang Faber Capito, writing from Strasbourg on 20 July 1536. He informed Luther that Erasmus had died on the eleventh 'post mediam noctis praesente Grynaeo . . . inter Lutheranos haereticos.' Martin Bucer, who wrote to Luther on 22 July, gave the same news about Erasmus' death and Grynaeus' presence (WA *Briefwechsel* 7 Epp 3048:46–50, 3050:28–32). Reedijk rejects this report as most unlikely because Grynaeus, as one of the most conspicuous Protestant leaders, would not have been an acceptable visitor, nor was he a member of Erasmus' inner circle.⁷

A note from Hieronymus Froben to Bonifacius Amerbach, written from the Froben house probably in the afternoon or early evening of 11 July 1536, brings us close to the scene: 'I have just gone to see our master but without his being aware of it. He seems to me much worse, for his tongue cleaves to his palate, so that you can scarcely understand what he says. His breathing is so deep and rapid that I wonder whether he will live through the night. He has eaten nothing today but chicken broth. I've summoned Sebastian [Sinckeler, the physician]; if he comes I'll see that he is brought into the bedroom without the master's knowledge, to enable him to take in what I've learned. I wanted you to know this, so that you could come earlier' (AK Ep 2036).

Ego m̃r inuisi Dm̃, sed ro m̃rio. Vider̃ mihi plurimū
desinere. nā lingua adhaerē palatū, ut loquēz nix intelligas.
Spiritu tam alia m̃ tolerare nō potes, ut mirari rogar, m̃
superuolū suū instātem nōtē. p̃r ius Caponis Lachā adhaerē
nihil sumpsit. Vocauit Sebastianū, si ueneris, iunabo
m̃ ipse icho m̃ m̃rio, in tubulū rig intraducā, quo
p̃cipua possis m̃ q̃ m̃ ego audiri. Hoc idro te s̃rre
nolui, ut compositionis adsis.

T. Frob.

Erasmus died just before midnight on 11 July 1536. Next day his corpse was carried by students to the minster and buried in what had been a small chapel of the Virgin. A brief sermon commending him was preached by Oswald Myconius (a cleric disliked by Erasmus), who was now *antistes* there and professor of theology at the university. Herwagen, writing to Beatus Rhenanus on 17 July, says Erasmus' death occurred '11 Iulii, sub horam duodecimam' (Allen Ep 3135:12–13) but what is printed in Allen as '11' was an error for '11'.⁸ Date and hour are certified by Amerbach as 'v. Id. Iul, sub mediam noctem' (Allen Ep 3141:103; similarly in a letter to Łaski, AK Ep 2065:8–9). The date 'v. Id. Iul.' must mean 11 July, but the preposition *sub* introduces an uncertainty. When referring to time it can mean either 'just before' or 'just after,' and we find that some persons in Erasmus' day and also in our own have assumed that Erasmus died on the twelfth.

In his Book of Hours, which Amerbach used for years after Erasmus' death, he underscores 'Quinto idus Iul,' which means 11 July in Roman reckoning; but in a memorandum added at the top of the same page he writes 'hora prima noctis mortuus est D. Erasmus Roterodamus vir mihi omnium amicissimus ... 1536.' By 'the first hour of the night' he means the hour between midnight and 1 AM, taking *sub* to mean just *after* midnight (that is, 12 July) instead of just *prior* to midnight on the eleventh. This apparent contradiction is explained by a peculiar local custom by which the clocks in the countryside were set one hour ahead of the minster clock in Basel.⁹ Owners of those clocks would have heard them strike twelve midnight on 11 July 1536 as Erasmus expired; as a sixteenth-century antiquarian wrote, 'wann es zu mittag anderswo XII schlecht, ists zu Basel eins unnd also fortan.'¹⁰ Another lingering custom was that of counting the first hour of the morning as part of the preceding day, 'secundum horologium Basiliense' as Bonifacius Amerbach and others termed it. (Thus Amerbach recorded the time of his children's births.) For public purposes, so to speak, Erasmus' death occurred on the eleventh, but for reasons of his own Bonifacius Amerbach liked to recall that by dying 'secundum horologium Basiliense' on the twelfth, Erasmus survived longer in Basel than he could have done anywhere else. Amerbach, who had most to do with the three gravestones honouring Erasmus, acted in accordance with his own principles and preferences. The first gravestone (1536) bore only the name. The second (March 1537) recorded the date but not the hour of the death: 'Quarto Eidus Iulias,' that is, 12 July (changed from 'Quinto' 'fifth' by Amerbach's decision). The third, with the epitaph (1538) seen in the minster today, has 'IIII Eid Iul ... MDXXXVI.'¹¹ Affection for Erasmus, pride in Basel, and a desire to honour both were clearly compelling reasons for Amerbach's care in recording for posterity the twelfth of July as the anniversary of Erasmus' passing. By his own preferred reckoning, 'secundum horologium Basiliense,' he acted correctly.

On the second gravestone the head of Terminus, Roman god of boundaries and for Erasmus a symbol of mortality and the finality of death, the 'ending end,' was added above the epitaph (on Terminus see further 'A Fish Diet' n118). Even this inscription was unsatisfactory, since it had misspelled words and other mistakes. In the final epitaph, the work of Hans Menzinger of Basel (1538), the figure of Terminus crowns the text.¹¹

Readers who have met Erasmus in biographies or histories are familiar with paintings or drawings by the younger Holbein, Dürer, and Metsys. Undoubtedly the best known is Holbein's 1523 portrait now in the Louvre. The last of the distinguished portraits is the roundel in the Kunstmuseum in Basel, painted by Holbein c 1532

hora prima nostri mortui est
 Erasmus Rotterodamus viri nobilissimi
 Iulius habet dies 31. Iulii
 Iouis na 30.
 15 g 1 Calendis Iulii
 8 A 2 Sextononas Iulii
 b 3 Quintono. Iulii
 16 c 4 Quarto no Iulii
 5 d 5 Tertio no Iulii. Anno
 e 6. Pridie no Iulii 15. 36
 13 f 7. Nonis Iulii.
 2 g 8. Octauo idus Iul.
 A 9. Septimo idus Iul.
 10 b 10. Sexto idus Iul.
 c 11. Quinto idus Iul.
 18 d 12. quarto idus Iul.
 7 e 13. Tertio idus Iul.
 B iiii
 Mors matris charissimae
 Anno 1543.

A page from Bonifacius Amerbach's Book of Hours, noting the death of Erasmus
 Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Handschriften-Abteilung, MS AN.vi.36

and after Erasmus' death owned by Amerbach. It shows an Erasmus who is plainly ageing, but even though he does not have the serenity seen in the Louvre portrait of 1523, when he was at the height of his powers, he was still working effectively as a productive scholar.

Two final drawings were made at the bedside during that watch on 11 July 1536. One, chalk on reddish-brown paper labelled 'Erasmi mortui effigies,' may be the drawing mentioned in a 1587 inventory of Amerbach property. Nothing is known of the artist, who may have been commissioned by Amerbach. Whoever he was, he gives us a sympathetic picture of a man dying in peace. The other picture, in silver-point, is more stark, a more uncompromising rendering of the arrival of death. In the first drawing the closed lips seem almost to express a slight smile, but they must signify, if anything, resignation. The parted lips in the second picture suggest only suffering. In both drawings the eyes are not yet fully closed. The inscription 'ERASMVS ROTERODAMVS MOR [TVVS?] DES[C]RIPTVS EST on the silver-point drawing may have been added by someone else.

Although Beatus Rhenanus was not in Basel at the time of the death, his account (dated 15 August 1536), in a sketch of Erasmus' life included in the preface to the posthumous volume of his Latin *Origen*, is known as well as any: 'At last, his strength gradually failing – for he suffered from dysentery for about a month – when he sensed his life's end was near, he displayed as always clear signs of Christian patience and a devout mind in affirming that his whole hope was fixed upon Christ, exclaiming earnestly, "O Jesus, mercy; Lord, set me free; Lord, make an end; Lord, have mercy upon me"; and in the German tongue "Lieber Got" (that is, "Dear God") ... No other words did he utter. He was fully conscious up to the last moment' (Allen I 53:29–54:37). Some variations of this account occur in the longer memoir composed by Beatus Rhenanus as a preface to the *Opera omnia* on its completion in 1540 and addressed to the emperor Charles V (Allen I 56–71; see especially 70:508–16). Beatus Rhenanus had left Basel in 1526 to live in Sélestat but continued his scholarly work and published it through the Froben press. Very likely he had other sources of information about Erasmus' death besides what he was told by Herwagen. Latin prayers murmured by Erasmus differ slightly in different reports. One example may be cited. A letter believed to have been written from Basel in or near July 1536 by Heinrich Stromer of Leipzig, physician and professor, who seems to have been in the neighbourhood of Basel at this time, gives them as 'O Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me. I will sing of the mercy and judgment of the Lord' (Ps 101:1; 100:1 Vulg). 'At that point,' Stromer adds, 'death took him' (Allen Ep 3134:20–4). Readers will have noticed that Beatus Rhenanus says Erasmus' last words were in Dutch (or German, as Beatus Rhenanus terms it). Whether this report is correct, and if so how Beatus Rhenanus obtained it, is not known. Did Erasmus, who wrote so voluminously in Latin, revert to the vernacular when departing from this world? Another 'perhaps' is all we can say, despite learned discussions of this topic, which is of minor interest.

On 21 July 1536 a letter about Erasmus' death was written to Bonifacius Amerbach by Ludwig Baer, a canon of Basel cathedral and professor in the university until the triumph of the reformers in 1529, when he too migrated to Freiburg. He was a trusted friend whom Erasmus frequently consulted on theological questions.¹² Baer tells Amerbach of his pleasure in the assurance received from an informant that Erasmus had not only died a Catholic but without wanting to see or hear any 'preachers of the new gospel' (Protestants), and that nobody was at his deathbed



Erasmus mortui effigies

One of two drawings made on 11 or 12 July 1536 at Erasmus' deathbed
Museum Teyler, Haarlem



A drawing of Erasmus on his deathbed ascribed to Hans Baldung Grien
Amerbachkabinett, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kupferstichkabinett

except Amerbach and a friend or servant (*familiarem* – apparently Lambert Coomans, of whom more will be said). Baer asks Amerbach to confirm this information (AK Ep 2041:25–33). No reply from Amerbach is known. But Baer's report was seriously inaccurate.

Erasmus declared more than once that he would never leave the Catholic church (Allen Epp 1167:416–26, 1195:28–30, 1386:44 / CWE Epp 1167:467–78, 1195:34–5, 1386:50–1; other references in Allen Ep 2123:14n). Nor did he. Yet his lot was to die in a city now mostly Protestant and to be buried in a cathedral now Protestant. He was, as Reedijk says, 'a Catholic *sui generis*, who had kept the world guessing by returning in the last year of his life to a Protestant city and dying there.'¹³ Conflicting claims and arguments about his orthodoxy and his influence, for better for worse, in disputes over religion, did not disappear with his death – on the contrary. Even the circumstances of his dying presented opportunities for admirers and detractors to air their judgments of him.

Three centuries after his death a claim was made by P.F.X. de Ram, on the basis of two seventeenth-century reports, that Erasmus had died in the arms of a priest, Lambert Coomans, murmuring 'O mater Dei, memento mei.'¹⁴ Coomans was a *famulus*, a domestic servant or maybe a servant-pupil, in Erasmus' household for about ten months (September 1535–July 1536). Erasmus liked him and in his will left him 200 florins 'if he is present at my death' (Allen xi 364:19–20 Appendix 25). In the context, however, this language, 'si mihi morienti adfuerit,' means no more than 'if he is still in my service at the time of my death' (language used of another servant in his first will; Allen vi 506:124–5 Appendix 19). That Coomans was present when Erasmus died is credible. No one connected with Erasmus' business affairs objected to the payment of the 200 florins, which Coomans received as promised.¹⁵ According to the article by de Ram, summarized and for the most part accepted by de Vocht in his history of the *Collegium Trilingue*, a catalogue of the deans of St Peter's Church, Turnhout, by Charles Gevaert (1639) was the source of the story about Coomans' role at Erasmus' deathbed. Gevaert (who himself became dean in 1632) records that an elderly colleague, acquainted with Coomans in the 1570s, told him of Coomans' relating how Erasmus had died in his arms, praying 'O mater Dei, memento mei.'

Not only was Coomans no priest when in Erasmus' service, but the tale of Erasmus' calling on the Mother of God is suspect *per se*. *Mater Dei* as a title standing alone is hard to find in Erasmian usage, though the synonym *Genetrix Dei* occurs in the *Liturgia Virginis Matris* (LB v 1331b). It is highly improbable that he uttered 'O Mater Dei' when dying, first because the only evidence that he did so comes from second- and third-hand seventeenth-century sources; secondly because he avoided such phrases, common though they were, since they are not found in Scripture. 'In Christo fixa est nostrae salutis sacra ancora, non in Virgine.'¹⁶

Coomans did become a priest some years after Erasmus' death, but as he was not in orders in 1536, the picture of Erasmus dying in the arms of a priest vanishes into thin air.¹⁷ So far as we know Erasmus died without priestly ministrations. Reedijk argues, correctly in my opinion, that popular and official sentiment in Basel at this time (June–July 1536) were such that to bring a priest to Erasmus' bedside, in Hieronymus Froben's house, to attend the dying man and perform the old rites, would have been extremely awkward at best and in practice unmanageable, and it is doubtful that Amerbach would have permitted it even if it could have been arranged.

A passage in Erasmus' *De praeparatione ad mortem* provides important evidence of his thoughts in his last two years about the sacraments and ceremonies customary near the time of death. The passage is important not only for what it says but because it was written in late 1533 and printed in 1534, when Erasmus, now advanced in years and in failing health, could not have written on this subject without deliberation and sincerity (on *De praeparatione ad mortem* see the introduction to 'The Funeral' 763).

In this tract Erasmus warns that one who is gravely ill should make confession if possible, through concern for his soul's health rather than his body's. The sacraments, through divine grace, are efficacious, and a Christian must hope he will not lack them. 'But if perchance the services of a priest are not available, then he must not (as the superstitious do) tremble for his soul and despair, but confess with his whole heart his own unrighteousness directly to God, who in his mercy will accept the will for the deed.' All the sacraments are signs of divine grace, but they are also efficacious without external ceremonies when the salvation of the faithful and humble requires. Sacraments are a solace, but it is more Christian to pray for faith and charity, without which sacraments are vain. 'Surely, as I think, many who are unabsolved by a priest, who are without the Eucharist, unanointed, buried without due rites, go to eternal rest, while others, with all ceremonies solemnly performed and even burial in church beside the high altar, are carried off to hell' (LB V 1310F–1311B; ASD V-1 376:899–378:935).¹⁸

'Sanctissime vixit, sanctissime mortuus est,' wrote Bonifacius Amerbach in his memoir (Allen Ep 3141:108). Many agreed (see the encomia in LB I (9)–(24), *** **** 1 recto – *** *** **** * 1 verso), but some dissented. In 1540, only four years after Erasmus' death, a dialogue entitled *Erasmi funus*, which included strong criticism of him, was published (without a publisher's name) in Basel, of all places. It was the work of Ortensio Lando (c 1505–c 1555), a busy young man of letters who is remembered for, among other things, the first Italian translation of More's *Utopia*. His *Erasmi funus* appeared under the pseudonym 'Philalethes Utopiensis.' In 1534 he had annoyed Erasmus and others by attacking Cicero, and Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*, in his *Cicero relegatus et revocatus*.

In *Erasmi funus* the two speakers are Arnoldus, a German who seems deeply affected by the news of Erasmus' death, and an Italian, Anianus, who takes a more complacent view of that event. Arnoldus praises Erasmus extravagantly – even has him preaching with Bible in hand as he lay dying – but is distressed by word that wicked monks have hailed the death with joy and have even desecrated the tomb in the cathedral. Anianus, on the other hand, deprecates Erasmus' supposed virtues and achievements. Arnoldus has heard that a saintly man had a vision of Erasmus in heaven (Lando may have read the colloquy 'The Apotheosis of Reuchlin'), but Anianus insists there is more to be blamed than praised in Erasmus. All Germany is mourning, Arnoldus protests. No, not all Germany by any means, Anianus retorts; and anyway, Germany has had many learned men besides Erasmus. He himself knows nothing about those wicked monks Arnoldus heard of, but Anianus does think there is much to be said for monasticism. He has known many good monks in Italy.

More than Erasmus' posthumous reputation is involved here. Paul F. Grendler considers the dialogue a satirical rebuke of Swiss reformers for failure to follow Erasmus' progressive principles, and at the same time an endorsement of those principles.¹⁹ Myron P. Gilmore interprets the work as mainly a parody, the extreme grief of Arnoldus as ironic, 'parodies of the usual encomia on Erasmus,' and the

dialogue as filled with echoes and criticism of Erasmus by Italian Ciceronians who belittled his Latinity, denounced him for anti-Italian sentiments, and hinted that he was a heretic or at least a man who gave aid and comfort to Luther.²⁰ Like most successful parody or irony, this dialogue can be read in more than one way. What is certain is that it provoked indignation among the good citizens of Basel. The city fathers appointed Joannes Herold, rector of the university, to reply to it. He did so in a very long oration, *Philopseudes* ('the lover of lies'; text in LB VIII 597–652, filling fifty-four folio columns).

This is an academic performance which no doubt gave satisfaction to a patient audience. It is loaded with classical quotations and allusions and a rich assortment of rhetorical flourishes: the kind of discourse a sixteenth-century audience would expect on such an occasion and would enjoy, for Herold's subject is relevant and of local interest. He has a partisan audience, since he is defending Basel's most famous citizen and the city itself against the mockery of an insolent foreigner. The orator devotes much of his speech to a biography of Erasmus, making use of the *Adagia*, *Colloquia*, letters, and much else, yet he ignores the controversial writings on the church and religion – not even Erasmus' work on the New Testament is mentioned. But the oration serves its purpose of praising Erasmus and pleasing the citizens. Though printed in LB, it was almost completely ignored even by Erasmian scholars until M.M. Phillips wrote a brief article on it.²¹

As for Luther, we may note that if the evidence in the *Tischreden* is reliable, he judged Erasmus no less harshly when Erasmus was dead than when he was alive: 'He lived and died as Epicurus, without minister [to perform the last rites] and consolation. He went to hell' (wa *Tischreden* 4 no 3963).²²

NOTES

- 1 For contemporary accounts of this iconoclasm see a letter of 13 February 1529 by Oecolampadius to Wolfgang Capito (text in Kidd *Documents* 464–6 no 219) and one by Erasmus dated 9 May 1529 to Willibald Pirckheimer (Allen Ep 2158:1–90).
- 2 For a corrected page of the third will see illustration facing page 48 of Cornelis Reedijk 'Das Lebensende des Erasmus' *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 57 (1958) 23–66. See also n18 below.
- 3 In common usage the dates of two of the three great editions of Erasmus' collected works are not quite accurate. The first (Basel), commonly cited as *Opera omnia* 1538–40, was completed in 1541 if we consider that tome III (1538) was revised in 1541. The Leiden (LB), edited by Jean Leclerc (Clericus), was issued in 1703–7, not 1703–6. The Amsterdam (ASD, 1969–) proceeds steadily; *festina lente* (*Adagia* II i 1) is the watchword. The history of these noble enterprises is told authoritatively by Dr Reedijk; see 'Erasmus' Final Modesty' in *Actes du congrès Erasme, Rotterdam 27–29 octobre 1969* (Amsterdam and London 1971) 174–92; *Tandem bona causa triumphat* Vorträge der Aeneas-Silvius-Stiftung an der Universität Basel 16 (Basel and Stuttgart 1980); 'The Leiden Edition of Erasmus' *Opera omnia* in a European Context' in *Erasmus und Europa* Wolfenbütteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissanceforschung 7 (1988) 163–82; ASD I–I vii–xxi (on that edition).

- 4 For a history of this library and an inventory of its contents see Husner. On the third will see P.P.J.L. van Peteghem 'Erasmus' Last Will, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Low Countires' in *Erasmus of Rotterdam: The Man and the Scholar, Proceedings of the Symposium, Rotterdam 1986* (Leiden 1988) 88–97.
- 5 See Carl Roth 'Das Legatum Erasmanum' in *Gedenkschrift* 282–98.
- 6 See Allen I 1–46 / CWE Ep 1341A for the 1523–4 catalogue and Allen Ep 2283 for that of 1530; the division of the works into volumes or series in both catalogues is printed also in CWE 24 697–702.
- 7 'Das Lebensende des Erasmus' (n2 above) 63. For a different but dubious opinion see the review by E. Droz in BHR 21 (1959) 563–8.
- 8 See Alfred Hartmann 'Beatus Rhenanus: Leben und Werke des Erasmus' in *Gedenkschrift* 12 n1.
- 9 See Hartmann *ibidem* 12–14.
- 10 *Ibidem* 13
- 11 See the illustrations and descriptions in Emil Major 'Die Grabstätte des Erasmus' in *Gedenkschrift* 299–315.
- 12 On Baer see CEBR and Farge *Paris Doctors* 23–6 no 22.
- 13 'Erasmus' Final Modesty' (n3 above) 177
- 14 *Bulletin de l'Académie royale des sciences et belles-lettres de Bruxelles* 9 no 2 (1842) 437–46; other references in Reedijk 'Das Lebensende des Erasmus' (n2 above) 27 n18
- 15 H. de Vocht *History of the Foundation and Rise of the Collegium Trilingue Lovaniense 1517–1550* Humanistica Lovaniensia 10–13, 4 vols (Louvain 1951–5) III 394–400
- 16 *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1087B. See also *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* LB IX 942C–F; *Supputatio* LB IX 570B; *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* LB IX 1163A–1167A.
- 17 See further Reedijk 'Das Lebensende des Erasmus' 27–33 (n2 above) and V. de Caprariis 'Qualche precisazione sulla morte di Erasmo' *Rivista storica italiana* 63 (1951) 100–8.
- 18 Reedijk's 'Das Lebensende des Erasmus' is the most valuable study of Erasmus' last days. It is supplemented by N. van der Blom 'Die letzten Worte des Erasmus' in the same periodical, 65 (1965) 195–214, which reviews Roman Catholic and Protestant reactions to the death of Erasmus, examines the 'Liever Got' incident, and considers various discrepancies in the accounts of the dying. *Hermeneus* (Zwolle) 37 (1965–6) 134–7 has an additional note ('Erasmus' laatste woorden') by van der Blom; summary in Margolin *Bibliographie érasmiennne* (1962–1970) 119 no 297. See also J. Trapman 'Erasmus' *Precationes*' in *Actus Conventus Neo-Latini Torontonensis* (Binghamton, NY 1991) 778. Another recent and detailed examination of evidence is that by 'Beat Rudolf Jenny, 'Tod, Begräbnis und Grabmal des Erasmus von Rotterdam' *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 86 no 2 (1986) 61–73, with three appendices 74–104. See also Jenny's 'Rückkehr nach Basel, Lebensende, Grab und Testament' in *Erasmus von Rotterdam, Vorkämpfer für Frieden und Toleranz* Ausstellung zum 450. Todestag des Erasmus von Rotterdam veranstaltet vom Historischen Museum Basel (Basel 26. April bis 7. September 1986) 63–5. Jenny's account includes information not available to Reedijk in 1958. In 1928 Erasmus' conjectural grave had been opened in connection with repairs to the cathedral, and the grave and its skeleton (the skull of which revealed evidence

of syphilis) is referred to in Reedijk's article 'Das Lebensende des Erasmus.' In 1974 a Metsys medal, found in another grave, led to the discovery of the real skeleton of Erasmus; see Bruno Kaufmann, 'Das Grab des Erasmus im Basler Münster' in *Erasmus von Rotterdam, Vorkämpfer für Frieden und Toleranz*. Myron P. Gilmore *Humanists and Jurists* (Cambridge, Mass 1963) has a good chapter on Erasmus' last years and another on Bonifacius Amerbach. R. Garcia Villoslada 'La muerte de Erasmo' in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati* 4 (1946) 381–406 and W.E. Campbell *Erasmus, Tyndale and More* (London 1949) 274–9 discuss the dying but accept uncritically the tale of Coomans' being a priest when with Erasmus; they have no independent value.

The standard work on Basel is Rudolf Wackernagel's *Geschichte der Stadt Basel* 3 vols (1907–24). For additional bibliography see Hans R. Guggisberg *Basel in the Sixteenth Century* (St Louis 1982) 75–8. This is the best short history. See also P.S. Allen's essay on Erasmus' relations with his printers in *Lectures* 109–37. Bainton *Erasmus of Christendom* 215–23 should be read on the tensions in Basel early in 1529.

- 19 Grendler reviews Lando's career in his *Critics of the Italian World, 1530–1630* (Madison 1969) 21–48, 113–17.
- 20 'Anti-Erasmianism in Italy: The Dialogue of Ortensio Lando on Erasmus' Funeral' *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1974) 1–14
- 21 'Une vie d'Erasme' *BHR* 34 (1972) 229–37
- 22 'Ist gefaren in bus correptam' is glossed by editors as a semi-proverbial expression in Germany; on this see *WA* 30 part 2 714. On Luther's own dying (18 February 1546) see texts in *The Reformation in Its Own Words* ed and trans Hans J. Hillerbrand (London 1964) 404–9. Since that book was published, more evidence has come to light. On the back of the last page of a 1545 edition of Luther's *An Kurfürsten zu Sachsen, und Landgraven zu Hessen* now in the John Hay Library at Brown University is a manuscript account, written on the very day of his death, of Luther's last prayer. Whether the anonymous writer who was eager to record these words heard them himself or was told them, we cannot say. For text and translation see Carolyn R.S. Lenz 'A Recently Discovered Manuscript Account of Luther's Last Prayer' *ARG* 66 (1975) 79–92.

EDITIONS OF THE COLLOQUIES

The editions of the *Colloquies* are listed in chronological order. Individual colloquies are named in the first edition in which they appeared. On the contents of the editions before March 1522 see the introduction to these volumes xxiv–xxvi.

November 1518	<i>Familiarium colloquiorum formulae</i> (Basel: Johann Froben)
February 1519	<i>Familiarium colloquiorum formulae</i> (Basel: Johann Froben)
March 1519	<i>Familiarium colloquiorum formulae</i> (Louvain: Dirk Martens)
May 1519	<i>Familiarium colloquiorum formulae</i> (Basel: Johann Froben)
October–December 1519	<i>Familiarium colloquiorum formulae</i> (Louvain: Dirk Martens)
March 1522	<i>Familiarium colloquiorum formulae</i> (Basel: Johann Froben): <i>Familiaria colloquia</i> now includes <i>Alia in congressu</i> (= <i>De votis temere susceptis</i> , its running title from August–September 1524 on), <i>Alia</i> (= <i>De captandis sacerdotiis</i> , its running title from August–September 1524 on), <i>Alia militaria</i> , <i>Herilia</i> , <i>Monitoria</i> , <i>De lusu</i> , <i>Confabulatio pia</i> , <i>Venatio</i> , <i>Euntes in ludum</i> , [Additional <i>formulae</i>], which includes <i>Convivium profanum</i> (its running title from August–September 1524 on); <i>Brevis de copia praeceptio</i> ; <i>Convivium religiosum</i> (the beginning, as far as 176:22)
July–August 1522	<i>Familiarium colloquiorum formulae</i> (Basel: Johann Froben): <i>Convivium religiosum</i> (complete); <i>De incomparabili heroe Ioanne Reuchlino in divorum numerum relato</i>
August 1523	<i>Familiarium colloquiorum formulae</i> (Basel: Johann Froben): <i>Proci et puellae</i> ; <i>Eubuli et Catarinae</i> (= <i>Virgo μισόγαμος</i> , its title from March 1529); <i>Eubuli</i> , <i>Catarinae</i> (= <i>Virgo poenitens</i> , its running title from August–September 1524 on); <i>Coniugium</i> ; <i>Militis et cartusiani</i> ; <i>Pseudochei</i> et <i>Philetymi</i> ; <i>Naufragium</i> ; <i>Diversoria</i> ; <i>Adolescentis et scorti</i> ; <i>Convivium poeticum</i>
March 1524	<i>Familiarium colloquiorum formulae</i> (Basel: Johann Froben): <i>Inquisitio</i> ; Γερωντολογία, sive Ὀχημα; Πτωχοπλούσιοι; <i>Antrionius</i> , <i>Magdalia</i> (= <i>Abbatissae et eruditae</i> , its running title)
August–September 1524	<i>Familiarium colloquiorum formulae</i> (Basel: Johann Froben): <i>Epithalamium Petri Aegidii</i> ; <i>Exorcismus</i> , sive <i>Spectrum</i> ; <i>Alcumistica</i> ; <i>Hippoplanus</i> ; Πτωχολογία; <i>Convivium fabulosum</i>

- February 1526 *Familiarium colloquiorum opus* (Basel: Johann Froben): *Puerpera*; *Peregrinatio religionis ergo*; Ἰχθυοφαγία; *Funus*
- June 1526 *Familiarium colloquiorum opus* (Basel: Johann Froben): *Echo*; *De utilitate Colloquiorum*
- 1527 *Familiarium colloquiorum opus* (Basel: Johann Froben): Πολυδαΐτία, *Dispar convivium*; *De rebus ac vocabulis*
- March 1529 *Familiarium colloquiorum opus* (Basel: Hieronymus Froben and Johann Herwagen): *Charon*; *Synodus grammaticorum*; Ἄγαμος γάμος, *sive Coniugium impar*; *Impostura*; *Cyclops*, *sive Evangeliphorus*; Ἀπροσδιόνυσα, *sive Absurda*; Ἰππεὺς ἀνιππος, *sive Ementita nobilitas*; Ἀστραγαλισμός, *sive Talorum lus*; *Senatulus*, *sive Γυναικοσυνέδριον*; addition to *De utilitate Colloquiorum*
- September 1529 *Familiarium colloquiorum opus* (Basel: Hieronymus Froben, Johann Herwagen, and Nicolaus Episcopus): *Diluculum*; Νηφάλιον συμπόσιον; *Ars notoria*; addition to *De utilitate Colloquiorum*
- September 1531 *Familiarium colloquiorum opus* (Basel: Hieronymus Froben and Nicolaus Episcopus): *Concio*, *sive Merdardus*; *Philodoxus*; *Opulentia sordida*; *Exequiae seraphicae*; *Amicitia*
- March 1533 *Familiarium colloquiorum opus* (Basel: Hieronymus Froben and Nicolaus Episcopus): *Problema*; *Epicureus*

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An Examination concerning the Faith / 419
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A Fish Diet / 675
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The Game of Tali. *See* Knucklebones
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A Lesson in Manners / 70
The Liar and the Man of Honour. *See* Pseudocheus and Philetymus
The Lover of Glory / 963
Manners. *See* A Lesson in Manners
Marriage / 306
A Marriage in Name Only, or The Unequal Match / 842
The Master's Bidding / 64
A Meeting of the Philological Society / 831

Merdardus. *See* The Sermon
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 The New Mother / 590
 Non-Sequiturs / 877
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 The Poetic Feast / 390
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 Pseudocheus and Philetymus: The Liar and the Man of Honour / 344
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 The Repentant Girl / 302
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 The Seraphic Funeral / 996
 The Sermon, or Merdardus / 938
 The Shipwreck / 352
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 The Well-to-do Beggars / 468
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- Charon / 818
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Virgo μισόγαμος / 279
Virgo poenitens / 302

WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED

This list provides bibliographical information for works referred to in short-title form in volumes 39 and 40. For Erasmus' writings see the short-title list following.

AK	<i>Die Amerbachkorrespondenz</i> ed Alfred Hartmann and B.R. Jenny (Basel 1942–)
Allen	<i>Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami</i> ed P.S. Allen, H.M. Allen, and H.W. Garrod (Oxford 1906–58) 11 vols and index
Allen <i>Age of Erasmus</i>	P.S. Allen <i>The Age of Erasmus</i> (Oxford 1914)
Allen <i>Lectures</i>	P.S. Allen <i>Erasmus: Lectures and Wayfaring Sketches</i> (Oxford 1934)
ARG	<i>Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte</i>
ASD	<i>Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterdami</i> (Amsterdam 1969–)
Bainton <i>Erasmus of Christendom</i>	R.H. Bainton <i>Erasmus of Christendom</i> (London 1970)
Bataillon 'Erasme conteur'	Marcel Bataillon 'Erasme conteur: folklore et invention narrative' in <i>Mélanges de langue et de littérature médiévales offerts à Pierre Le Gentil</i> (Paris 1973) 85–104
Bataillon <i>Erasme et l'Espagne</i>	Marcel Bataillon <i>Erasme et l'Espagne</i> (Paris 1937)
Bataillon <i>Erasmo y España</i>	Marcel Bataillon <i>Erasmo y España</i> (Mexico City and Buenos Aires 1950; 2nd ed 1966)
Bataillon <i>Erasmo y España</i> (1991)	Marcel Bataillon <i>Erasmo y España</i> ed Daniel Devoto and Charles Amiel, 3 vols (Geneva 1991)
BE 2nd series	<i>Bibliotheca Erasmiana</i> 2nd series <i>Colloquia</i> ed F. Vander Haeghen (Ghent 1903–7) 3 vols (part of <i>Bibliotheca Erasmiana: bibliographie des oeuvres d'Erasme</i> [Ghent 1897–1950] 12 vols extrait de la <i>Bibliotheca Belgica</i> , fondée par Ferdinand Vander Haeghen)
de Beatis <i>Travel Journal</i>	<i>The Travel Journal of Antonio de Beatis: Germany, Switzerland, the Low Countries, France, and Italy 1517–1518</i> ed J.R. Hale, trans J.R. Hale and J.M.A. Lindon, Hakluyt Society 2nd series 150 (London 1979)
BHR	<i>Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance</i>

- Bierlaire *Erasme et ses Colloques* Franz Bierlaire *Erasme et ses Colloques: le livre d'une vie* (Geneva 1977)
- Bierlaire *Les Colloques d'Erasme* Franz Bierlaire *Les Colloques d'Erasme: réforme des études, réforme des moeurs et réforme de l'Eglise au xvi^e siècle* (Paris 1978)
- Born *The Education of a Christian Prince by Desiderius Erasmus* ed and trans Lester K. Born (New York 1936; reissued in paperback in the series Records of Civilization 1968)
- BRE *Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus* ed A. Horawitz and K. Hartfelder (Leipzig 1886; repr Hildesheim 1966)
- Burton *Anatomy of Melancholy* Robert Burton *Anatomy of Melancholy* ed Holbrook Jackson, Everyman's Library (London and New York 1932; repr 1961) 3 vols
- Calvin ICR *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion* trans T. McNeill, The Library of Christian Classics 20-1 (London 1960) 2 vols
- CCL *Corpus christianorum, series Latina* (Turnhout 1954-)
- CEBR *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation* ed Peter G. Bietenholz and Thomas B. Deutscher (Toronto 1985-7) 3 vols
- Chaucer *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* ed F.N. Robinson (Boston 1933; 2nd ed 1957)
- CHB *Cambridge History of the Bible: I From the Beginnings to Jerome* ed P.R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans (Cambridge 1970); II *The West from the Fathers to the Reformation* ed G.W.H. Lampe (Cambridge 1969); III *The West from the Reformation to the Present Day* ed S.L. Greenslade (Cambridge 1963)
- Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* Jacques Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique chez Erasme* (Paris 1981) 2 vols
- Clemen *Luthers Werke in Auswahl* ed Otto Clemen et al (Berlin 1912-33; numerous reprints) 8 vols
- Colet *Opera* John Colet *Opera* ed and trans J.H. Lupton (London 1867-76; repr Ridgewood, NJ 1965-6) 4 vols
- Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia: Douzième stage international d'études humanistes, Tours 1969* ed J.-C. Margolin (Paris and Toronto 1972) 2 vols

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- Dickinson J.C. Dickinson *The Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham* (Cambridge 1956)
- EETS Early English Text Society
- Epistolae obscurorum virorum* *Epistolae obscurorum virorum* ed and trans Griffin Stokes (London 1909; repr 1925)
- ERSY Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook
- Farge *Orthodoxy and Reform* James K. Farge *Orthodoxy and Reform in Early Reformation France* (Leiden 1985)
- Ferguson *Erasmi opuscula* *Erasmi opuscula: A Supplement to the Opera Omnia* ed W.K. Ferguson (The Hague 1933)
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- Knowles ROE David Knowles *The Religious Orders in England* (Cambridge 1948–59) 3 vols
- Latimer *Selected Sermons* *Selected Sermons of Hugh Latimer* ed Allan G. Chester (Charlottesville 1968)
- LB *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami opera omnia* ed J. Leclerc (Leiden 1703–6; repr 1961–2) 10 vols
- Leo of Rozmital *Travels* *The Travels of Leo of Rozmital through Germany, Flanders, England, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy* ed and trans Malcolm Letts, *Hakluyt Society* 2nd series 108 (Cambridge 1957)
- LP *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII* ed J.S. Brewer and J. Gairdner (London 1862–1910) 21 vols in 33, and Addenda vol 1 parts 1–2

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- LW Martin Luther *Works* ed J. Pelikan et al (St Louis 1955–86) 55 vols
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- More *Complete Works* See Yale cwm
- More *Correspondence* *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More* ed Elizabeth Frances Rogers (Princeton 1947)
- More *English Works* *The English Works of Sir Thomas More* facsimile of Rastell's edition of 1557, ed with a modern version by W.E. Campbell, with introduction and notes by A.W. Reed, R.W. Chambers, and W.A.G. Doyle Davidson (London and New York 1931); page references are to Campbell's version.
- More *Latin Epigrams* *The Latin Epigrams of Thomas More* ed and trans Leicester Bradner and Charles Arthur Lynch (Chicago 1953)
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- NCE *New Catholic Encyclopedia* prepared by an editorial staff at the Catholic University of America (New York 1967–79) 17 vols

- Nichols *Pilgrimages* *Pilgrimages to Saint Mary of Walsingham and Saint Thomas of Canterbury. By Desiderius Erasmus* trans J.G. Nichols (London 1849; 2nd ed 1875)
- NPNF *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (New York 1886–1900)
- PG *Patrologiae cursus completus ... series Graeca* ed J.P. Migne (Paris 1857–1912) 162 vols
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- PS Parker Society
- Reedijk *Poems of Erasmus* *The Poems of Desiderius Erasmus* ed Cornelis Reedijk (Leiden 1956)
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- STC *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad* ed A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave (London 1926); 2nd ed rev W.A. Jackson et al (London 1976–91) 3 vols
- Strauss *Manifestations of Discontent* Gerald Strauss *Manifestations of Discontent in Germany on the Eve of the Reformation* (Bloomington and London 1971)
- Strype *Ecclesiastical Memorials* John Strype *Ecclesiastical Memorials Relating Chiefly to Religion and the Reformation of It* (Oxford 1812–28) 6 vols
- Surtz *Praise of Wisdom* Edward Surtz *The Praise of Wisdom: Philosophy, Education, and Communism in More's Utopia* (Chicago 1957)
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- Telle *Erasme et le septième sacrement* E.V. Telle *Erasme de Rotterdam et le septième sacrement* (Geneva 1954)
- Thompson *Inquisitio de fide* *Inquisitio de fide* ed Craig R. Thompson (New Haven 1950; 2nd ed, with supplementary bibliography, Hamden, Conn 1975)
- Thorndike *Magic and Experimental Science* Lynn Thorndike *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York 1923–58) 8 vols
- Thorndike *University Records* Lynn Thorndike *University Records and Life in the Middle Ages* (New York 1944; repr 1949, 1975)
- Tilley M.P. Tilley *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor, Mich 1950)
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- Vives *Opera* Juan Luis Vives *Opera omnia* ed G. Majansius (Valencia 1782–90; repr London 1964) 8 vols
- De Vocht *Earliest English Translations* Henry de Vocht *Earliest English Translations of Erasmus' Colloquia* (Louvain 1928)
- WA *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar 1883–)
- WA *Briefwechsel* *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Briefwechsel* (Weimar 1930–78) 15 vols

- WA *Deutsche Bibel* *D. Martin Luthers Deutsche Bibel* (Weimar 1906–61) 12 vols
- WA *Tischreden* *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Tischreden* (Weimar 1912–21) 6 vols
- Yale CWM *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More* (New Haven and London 1961–)
- Yates *Memory* Frances Yates *The Art of Memory* (Chicago 1966; repr 1972)

SHORT-TITLE FORMS FOR ERASMUS' WORKS

Titles following colons are longer versions of the same, or are alternative titles. Items entirely enclosed in square brackets are of doubtful authorship. For abbreviations, see Works Frequently Cited.

Acta: Academiae Lovaniensis contra Lutherum *Opuscula* / CWE 71

Adagia: Adagiorum chiliades 1508, etc (Adagiorum collectanea for the primitive form, when required) LB II / ASD II-1, 4, 5, 6 / CWE 30-6

Admonitio adversus mendacium: Admonitio adversus mendacium et obtrectationem LB X

Annotationes in Novum Testamentum LB VI / CWE 51-60

Antibarbari LB X / ASD I-1 / CWE 23

Apologia ad Caranzam: Apologia ad Sanctium Caranzam, or Apologia de tribus locis, or Responsio ad annotationem Stunicae . . . a Sanctio Caranza defensam LB IX

Apologia ad Fabrum: Apologia ad Iacobum Fabrum Stapulensem LB IX

Apologia adversus monachos: Apologia adversus monachos quosdam hispanos LB IX

Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem: Apologia adversus debacchationes Petri Sutoris LB IX

Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii: Apologia ad viginti et quattuor libros A. Pii LB IX

Apologia contra Latomi dialogum: Apologia contra Iacobi Latomi dialogum de tribus linguis LB IX / CWE 71

Apologiae contra Stunicam: Apologiae contra Lopidem Stunicam LB IX / ASD IX-2

Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo' LB IX

Apologia de laude matrimonii: Apologia pro declamatione de laude matrimonii LB IX / CWE 71

Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem': Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem resurgemus' LB IX

Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei: Apologia qua respondet duabus invectivis Eduardi Lei *Opuscula*

Apophthegmata LB IV

Appendix respondens ad Sutorem LB IX

Argumenta: Argumenta in omnes epistolas apostolicas nova (with Paraphrases)

Axiomata pro causa Lutheri: Axiomata pro causa Martini Lutheri *Opuscula* / CWE 71

Carmina: poems in LB I, IV, V, VIII / ASD I-7 / CWE 85-6

Catalogus lucubrationum LB I

Ciceronianus: Dialogus Ciceronianus LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 28

Colloquia LB I / ASD I-3 / CWE 39-40

Compendium vitae Allen I / CWE 4

Conflictus: Conflictus Thaliae et Barbariei LB I

[Consilium: Consilium cuiusdam ex animo cupientis esse consultum] *Opuscula* / CWE 71

De bello Turcico: Consultatio de bello Turcico (in Psalmi)

De civilitate: De civilitate morum puerilium LB I / CWE 25

Declamatio de morte LB IV

Declamatiuncula LB IV

Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas: Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas sub nomine facultatis theologiae Parisiensis LB IX

De concordia: De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia, or De amabili ecclesiae concordia (in Psalmi)

De conscribendis epistolis LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 25

De constructione: De constructione octo partium orationis, or Syntaxis LB I / ASD I-4

De contemptu mundi: Epistola de contemptu mundi LB V / ASD V-1 / CWE 66

De copia: De duplici copia verborum ac rerum LB I / ASD I-6 / CWE 24

De esu carnum: Epistola apologetica ad Christophorum episcopum Basiliensem de interdicto esu carnum LB IX / ASD IX-1

De immensa Dei misericordia: Concio de immensa Dei misericordia LB V

De libero arbitrio: De libero arbitrio diatribe LB IX

De praeparatione: De praeparatione ad mortem LB V / ASD V-1

De pueris instituendis: De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 26

De puero Iesu: Concio de puero Iesu LB V / CWE 29

De puritate tabernaculi: De puritate tabernaculi sive ecclesiae christianae (in Psalmi)

De ratione studii LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 24

De recta pronuntiatione: De recta latini graecique sermonis pronuntiatione LB I / ASD I-4 / CWE 26

Detectio praestigiarum: Detectio praestigiarum cuiusdam libelli germanice scripti LB X / ASD IX-1

De taedio Iesu: Disputatiuncula de taedio, pavore, tristitia Iesu LB V

De vidua christiana LB V / CWE 66

De virtute amplectenda: Oratio de virtute amplectenda LB V / CWE 29

[Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium: Chonradi Nastadiensis dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium] *Opuscula* / CWE 7

Dilutio: Dilutio eorum quae Iodocus Clithoveus scripsit adversus declamationem suasoriam matrimonii

Divinationes ad notata Bedae LB IX

Ecclesiastes: Ecclesiastes sive de ratione concionandi LB V / ASD V-4, 5

Elenchus in N. Bedae censuras LB IX

Enchiridion: Enchiridion militis christiani LB V / CWE 66

Encomium matrimonii (in De conscribendis epistolis)

Encomium medicinae: Declamatio in laudem artis medicae LB I / ASD I-4 / CWE 29

Epistola ad Dorpium LB IX / CWE 3 / CWE 71

Epistola ad fratres Inferioris Germaniae: Responsio ad fratres Germaniae Inferioris ad epistolam apologeticam incerto autore proditam LB X / ASD IX-1

Epistola ad graculos: Epistola ad quosdam imprudentissimos graculos LB X

Epistola apologetica de Termino LB X

Epistola consolatoria: Epistola consolatoria virginibus sacris LB V

Epistola contra pseudevangelicos: Epistola contra quosdam qui se falso iactant evangelicos LB X / ASD IX-1

Euripidis Hecuba LB I / ASD I-1

Euripidis Iphigenia in Aulide LB I / ASD I-1

Exomologesis: Exomologesis sive modus confitendi LB V

Explanatio symboli: Explanatio symboli apostolorum sive catechismus LB V /
ASD V-1

Ex Plutarcho versa LB IV / ASD IV-2

Expositio concionalis (in Psalmi)

Formula: Conficiendarum epistolarum formula (see De conscribendis epistolis)

Hyperaspistes LB X

In Nuce[m] Ovidii commentarius LB I / ASD I-1 / CWE 29

In Prudentium: Commentarius in duos hymnos Prudentii LB V / CWE 29

Institutio christiani matrimonii LB V

Institutio principis christiani LB IV / ASD IV-1 / CWE 27

[Julius exclusus: Dialogus Julius exclusus e coelis] *Opuscula* / CWE 27

Lingua LB IV / ASD IV-1A / CWE 29

Liturgia Virginis Matris: Virginis Matris apud Lauretum cultae liturgia LB V /
ASD V-1

Luciani dialogi LB I / ASD I-1

Manifesta mendacia CWE 71

Methodus (see Ratio)

Modus orandi Deum LB V / ASD V-1

Moria: Moriae encomium LB IV / ASD IV-3 / CWE 27

Novum Testamentum: Novum Testamentum 1519 and later (Novum instrumentum
for the first edition, 1516, when required) LB VI

Obsecratio ad Virginem Mariam: Obsecratio sive oratio ad Virginem Mariam in rebus
adversis LB V

Oratio de pace: Oratio de pace et discordia LB VIII

Oratio funebris: Oratio funebris in funere Bertae de Heyen LB VIII / CWE 29

Paeon Virgini Matri: Paeon Virgini Matri dicendus LB V

Panegyricus: Panegyricus ad Philippum Austriae ducem LB IV / ASD IV-1 /
CWE 27

Parabolae: Parabolae sive similia LB I / ASD I-5 / CWE 23

Paraclesis LB V, VI

Paraphrasis in Elegantias Vallae: Paraphrasis in Elegantias Laurentii Vallae LB I /
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Paraphrasis in Matthaeum, etc (in Paraphrasis in Novum Testamentum)

Paraphrasis in Novum Testamentum LB VII / CWE 42-50

Peregrinatio apostolorum: Peregrinatio apostolorum Petri et Pauli LB VI, VII

Precatio ad Virginis filium Iesum LB V

Precatio dominica LB V

Precationes LB V

Precatio pro pace ecclesiae: Precatio ad Iesum pro pace ecclesiae LB IV, v

Psalmi: Psalmi, or Enarrationes sive commentarii in psalmos LB v / ASD v-2, 3

Purgatio adversus epistolam Lutheri: Purgatio adversus epistolam non sobriam Lutheri LB x / ASD IX-1

Querela pacis LB IV / ASD IV-2 / CWE 27

Ratio: Ratio seu Methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram theologiam (Methodus for the shorter version originally published in the *Novum instrumentum* of 1516) LB v, vi

Responsio ad annotationes Lei: Liber quo respondet annotationibus Lei LB ix

Responsio ad collationes: Responsio ad collationes cuiusdam iuvenis gerontodidascali LB ix

Responsio ad disputationem de divortio: Responsio ad disputationem cuiusdam Phimostomi de divortio LB ix

Responsio ad epistolam Pii: Responsio ad epistolam paraeneticam Albert Pii, or Responsio ad exhortationem Pii LB ix

Responsio ad notulas Bedaicas LB x

Responsio ad Petri Cursii defensionem: Epistola de apologia Cursii LB x / Allen Ep 3032

Responsio adversus febricitantis libellum: Apologia monasticae religionis LB x

Spongia: Spongia adversus aspergines Hutteni LB x / ASD IX-1

Supputatio: Supputatio calumniarum Natalis Bedae LB ix

Tyrannicida: Tyrannicida, declamatio Lucianicae respondens LB i / ASD I-1 / CWE 29

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Vita Hieronymi: Vita divi Hieronymi Stridonensis *Opuscula* / CWE 61

Index of Biblical and Apocryphal References

This index includes references both in Erasmus' text and in the annotator's commentary. For references to Erasmus' Paraphrases and Annotations, see also the General Index under Erasmus, original works: *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum*; *Paraphrasis in Novum Testamentum*. For references to Erasmus' commentaries on the Psalms, see also the General Index under Erasmus, original works: *Commentarius in psalmum secundum*; *De bello Turcico*; *De concordia*; *De puritate tabernaculi*; *Enarratio in psalmum xxii*; *Enarratio in psalmum xxxiii*; *Enarratio in psalmum xxxviii*; *Expositio concionalis in psalmum lxxxv*; *In psalmum quartum concio*; Psalms, commentaries on the. Unless otherwise noted, the psalm numbers and verses given are those of the Authorized Version. For other commentaries on Scripture see under the names of individual authors in the Index of Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance References and in the General Index.

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